



Standards Committee

Date: 12 November 2012
Time: 6.15 pm
Venue: Training Room Block C
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe Bucks

Membership

Councillors: D J Carroll, Mrs L M Clarke, Mrs G A Jones, Ms R Knight, J L Richards OBE, J A Savage, D A C Shakespeare OBE and Ms J D Wassell

Independent Persons (observing) Revd G Hargrove and Mrs E Springford

Parish Council Members (observing) 3 x vacancies

Agenda

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**For further information, please contact Peter Druce ext 3210 DDI 01494 421210
peter_druce@wycombe.gov.uk 01494 421210, peter_druce@wycombe.gov.uk**

Agenda Item 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests by Members relating to items on the agenda. If any Member is uncertain as to whether an interest should be disclosed, he or she is asked if possible to contact the District Solicitor prior to the meeting.

Members are reminded that if they are declaring an interest, they should state the nature of that interest whether or not they are required to withdraw from the meeting.

Agenda Item 3

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 27 JUNE 2012

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2012 (previously circulated)

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Agenda Item 4

In reference to the delegation given to this first meeting of the Standards Committee under the new Standards Regulations by the Special Council Meeting of 31 July 2012 (Minute 37: Monitoring Officer's Report and Minutes of Standards Committee 27 June 2012 resolution ii) the Committee is required to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman from amongst its Membership for the remainder of the 2012-13 municipal year.

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Agenda Item 5

APPOINTMENT OF NON-VOTING PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Officer Contact: David Ruddock, District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

DDI: 01494 421252

E-mail: david_ruddock@wycombe.gov.uk

Wards affected: all

PROPOSED DECISION

The Committee is asked to agree to the co-option of Mrs Vicki Smith, Mr Dallas Banfield and Mr John Sherlock as Parish Council members onto the Committee.

Corporate Implications

Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 has made major changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for members, including the abolition of the statutory Standards Committee which included three Parish Council members. However under the new arrangements, Parish Council representatives may still be involved as non-voting members of the Committee.

Background and Issues

Under the new standards arrangements introduced by the Localism Act, the District Council continues to have responsibility for dealing with standards complaints against Parish Councillors, but with the abolition of the statutory Standards Committee under the old regime, the Parish Council representatives have ceased to hold office.

On 31 July 2012, the Council agreed that the Parish Councils be invited to nominate a maximum of three Parish Councillors to be co-opted as non-voting members of the Committee under the new Standards arrangements. This report recommends that the three Parish councillors named above, whose names have been put forward by the Wycombe District Association of Local Councils (WDALC), and all of whom have served as Parish Council members on the former Standards Committee, be co-opted onto this Committee.

Background Papers

Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and associated Government guidance; agendas and minutes of the Standards Committee meetings of 24 January 2012, 27 March 2012, and 27 June 2012; the agenda and minutes of the Council meeting of 31 July 2012.

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Agenda Item 6

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Officer Contact: David Ruddock, District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Tel: 01494 421252, E-mail: david_ruddock@wycombe.gov.uk

Wards affected: all

PROPOSED DECISION

The Committee is asked to recommend the adoption of the attached revised Terms of Reference to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Corporate Implications

The proposed revised Terms of Reference are in response to Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011, which has made fundamental changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for members.

Executive Summary

The Terms of Reference of the Committee (**Appendix A**) have been revised to reflect the extensive changes made to the standards regime by the Localism Act. The proposed Terms of Reference reflect the new composition of the Committee, and set out the matters that remain the responsibility of the Committee and those matters that are the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer.

Background and Issues

On 31 July 2012, Council agreed:

- (a) That a Standards Committee be established, comprising eight elected members of the District Council, appointed proportionally (currently 6 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat).
- (b) That the Leader of the Council be requested to nominate to the Committee one member who is a member of the Executive;
- (c) That the Parish Councils be invited to nominate a maximum of three Parish Councillors to be co-opted as non-voting members of the Committee.

As a result of the changes made by the Localism Act there is now no statutory requirement to have a Standards Committee. However, it was felt that it would be advisable to retain a Standards Committee in order to deal with standards issues and case work by way of Hearings Panels drawn from members of the Committee. This Committee is now a normal committee of Council, without the unique features which the statutory Standards Committee was given by the previous legislation.

As a result the composition of the Committee is governed by proportionality. The former co-opted independent members of the Committee ceased to hold office on 30 June, but the Act requires the appointment of Independent persons who must be consulted at various stages of an investigation. The Independent Persons may be

invited to attend meetings of the Standards Committee, but cannot be voting members of the Committee.

The District Council continues to have responsibility for dealing with standards complaints against elected and appointed members of Parish Councils, but the former Parish Council representatives ceased to hold office on 30 June. The District Council can choose whether it wants to continue to involve Parish Council representatives as co-opted but not voting members, and has chosen to do so.

The proposed Terms of Reference reflect the new composition of the Committee, and set out the matters that remain the responsibility of the Committee, including the consideration of complaints at Hearings Panels arranged for the purpose, and those matters that are now the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer. These are:

- following consultation with the Independent Person, determination on whether a complaint warrants investigation;
- the arrangement of investigations;
- where appropriate, seeking informal resolution as an alternative to formal investigation;
- the closure of complaints;
- Where the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code, and after consultation with the Independent Person. to seek local resolution where appropriate;
- to arrange Local Standards Hearings and to determine the composition of the Hearings Panel.

The Standards Committee's role in granting dispensations to members where necessary, and its role in monitoring the operation of the Council's Complaints procedure, have also been included.

Conclusions

The Committee is recommended to refer the proposed terms of reference to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee, as a revision of the Constitution, for recommendation to Council.

Background Papers

- Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and associated Government guidance
- Agendas and minutes of the Standards Committee meetings of 24 January 2012, 27 March 2012, and 27 June 2012
- Agenda and minutes of the Council meeting of 31 July 2012.

4. Standards Committee

Subject	Reserved to Council	Reserved to Committee	Delegated to Officers
Standards of Conduct	Major changes to Codes of Conduct and Procedures affecting District Council Members and Officers.	<p>(a) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members and co-opted Members of Wycombe District Council.</p> <p>(b) To assist Members and co-opted Members of the District Council to observe the Council's Code of Conduct.</p> <p>(c) To advise the District Council on the adoption or revision of a Code of Conduct.</p> <p>(d) To monitor the operation of the District Council's Code of Conduct, having regard to any national or local guidance.</p> <p>(e) To consider and grant dispensations in respect of Member interests as provided in the Localism Act 2011.</p>	
Training		<p>(f) To advise, train or arrange the training of Members and Co-opted Members of the District Council on matters relating to the authority's Code of Conduct</p>	

Subject	Reserved to Council	Reserved to Committee	Delegated to Officers
Investigation of complaints		(g) To consider any matters referred to it by the Monitoring Officer (delegated to ad hoc Hearings Panel).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following consultation with the Independent Person, determination on whether a complaint warrants investigation • the arrangement of investigations • where appropriate, to seek informal resolution as an alternative to formal investigation • the closure of complaints • Where the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code, and after consultation with the Independent Person. to seek local resolution where appropriate • to arrange Local Standards Hearings and to determine the composition of the Hearings Panel
Parishes		(h) To discharge the functions in (a) to (g) above in relation to Parish Councils within the area of the Wycombe District.	
Officers		(i) To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of Codes of Conduct.	As required by statute or otherwise as required in regard to propriety issues
Complaints, Comments and Compliments		(j) To monitor the operation of the Council's complaints procedure	

- Note:**
1. The Committee may call upon any Member or Officer to assist with its work.
 2. Membership to be made up as follows:- 8 Councillors in accordance with political balance, and including at least one Member of the Cabinet.
 3. There are no Standing Deputies.
 4. The Council may appoint up to 2 Independent Persons whose views must be sought before a decision is made on any matter that it has been decided to investigate. Independent Persons are not Members of the Committee and have no voting rights.
 5. Parish Councils may nominate a maximum of 3 Parish Councillors to be co-opted as non-voting Members of the Committee.

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Agenda Item 7

a) Complaints/Comments/Compliments - Information and Improvements

Contact Officer: Jean Roberts

Ext: 3202

Recommendation

The Standards Committee is asked to:

Note the attached data and charts for the periods 1 April-30 June 2012 (Quarter 1).

Corporate Implications

The establishment and maintenance of complaints procedures is conducive to the discharge of the Council's various functions and as such are authorised by Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

There are no financial implications.

A robust complaints procedure assists in minimising the risks to the Council arising from complaints.

Background

Quarterly information is supplied to all business units which record complaints, comments or compliments on ServiceMail, and after consultation with managers, composite information for each Management Team and the Strategic Management Board. Further complaints statistics are also incorporated as Local Performance Indicators by the Policy and Research Unit.

Report

The information and charts for the quarter are attached herewith. In addition a summarised report on LG Ombudsman complaints is also attached. The target in place for complaints responded to in target is 90% for this year.

The following are the priority areas for improvement and the results for this quarter for all services within the Council:

1. Answering complaints within our corporate timescale of 10 working days

This quarter there was a total percentage of complaints within target of 90.6%, slightly above target.

2. Review of Complaints by business units to "Learn Lessons" and Improvements Made

For this quarter there are 3 improvements recorded, a good result and an increase from the previous quarter.

3. Customer Feedback Cards - Complaints

The numbers of customer feedback responses will always be lower than the number of complaints received as these are sent out after our response. This quarter has seen feedback logged for 41 out of the 64 items received, which is a good improvement from the last quarter. Feedback for this quarter with regard to outcome stands at 90% satisfaction, complaint handling 88%, and speed of response stands at 95%.

4. Complaints to the LG Ombudsman

There have been no findings of maladministration. There are 3 current ongoing Ombudsman enquiries.

5. Compliments Logging

The total for compliments logged is 98 for this quarter, another improvement from the last quarter. Three service areas are all in the lead with 20 compliments each – Environmental Health, Customer Service Centre and Off-Street Parking. This is a very good result for the services concerned.

Comments/actions from Strategic Management Board

- (a) Future reports be submitted directly to SMB, following an initial review by Service Managers and Servicemail users;
- (b) Future reports are reduced in detail, with the retention of the graphs and key information;
- (c) That a report back be made following the conclusion of the investigation into the increasing number of complaints regarding the automated telephone system [*Meetings now taking place with small working party to review and improve the telephone system for customers*].

(b) LGO Annual Report – 2011-12

The Standards Committee is asked to note the annual report provided by the LG Ombudsman.

Background Papers

“Have We Got It Right” leaflet for the public.

Agenda Item 7 Appendix A

Items by Type by Business Unit by In Target between 01/04/12 and 30/06/12		
<i>[N.B. No comments recorded this quarter].</i>		
		Total
Complaint		
Building Control	In Target	1
Council Tax	Out of Target	3
	In Target	14
Customer Service Centre	In Target	6
Development Management	In Target	11
Environmental Health	In Target	4
Green Space Contracts	In Target	2
Homelessness	In Target	2
Housing Applications	Out of Target	1
	In Target	1
Housing Benefit	Out of Target	1
	In Target	7
Housing Management	In Target	1
Internal Audit and Risk Management	In Target	1
Legal Services	In Target	1
Parking - Off-street	In Target	1
Parking - On-street	In Target	2
Recycling	In Target	1
Refuse	In Target	1
Sports Centres Client	Out of Target	1
	In Target	2
Total for Complaint		64

Items by Type by Business Unit by In Target between 01/04/12 and 30/06/12

Compliments		
		Total
(CE) Council	In Target	1
Cohesion	In Target	1
Community Safety	In Target	3
Corporate Administration	In Target	1
Council Secretariat	In Target	1
Customer Service Centre	In Target	20
Development Management	In Target	13
Environmental Health	In Target	20
Green Space Contracts	In Target	1
Homelessness	In Target	1
Housing Applications	In Target	1
Housing Management	In Target	2
Museum - Wycombe	In Target	1
Parking - Off-street	In Target	20
Planning & Sustainability HoS & PA	In Target	2
Projects & Development (Community)	In Target	1
Ranger Services	In Target	4
Refuse	In Target	1
Spatial Planning	In Target	3
Sports Centres Client	In Target	1
Total for Compliment		98

**Items by Type by Business Unit by In Target between
01/04/12 and 30/06/12**

Internal Client Compliments		
Business Unit		Total
Building Control	In Target	1
Green Space Contracts	In Target	2
Total for Internal Client Compliments		3

Complaints in target from 01/04/12 to 30/06/12

Team: CHIEF EXECUTIVE TEAM

Business Unit	In Target	Out of Target
Council Tax	14	3
Housing Benefit	7	1

Total for CHIEF EXECUTIVE TEAM

In target:	21
Out of target:	4

Team: I WESTGATE TEAM

Business Unit	In Target	Out of Target
Building Control	1	0
Customer Service Centre	6	0
Development Management	11	0
Environmental Health	4	0
Green Space Contracts	2	0
Homelessness	1	0
Housing Applications	2	1
Housing Management	1	0
Internal Audit and Risk Management	1	0
Legal Services	1	0
Parking - Off-street	1	0
Parking - On-street	2	0
Recycling	1	0
Refuse	1	0
Sports Centres Client	2	1

Total for I WESTGATE TEAM

In target:	37
Out of target:	2

TOTAL FOR WYCOMBE DC

In target:	58	90.6%
Out of target:	6	9.4%

Complaint Feedback from 01/04/12 to 30/06/12

Business Unit: Council Tax			
Speed - Yes:	15	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	15	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	15	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	15	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Customer Service Centre			
Speed - Yes:	5	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	5	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	5	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	5	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Development Management			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	1
Easily Understood - Yes:	2	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	1
Complaint Handling - Yes:	0	Complaint Handling - No:	2
Business Unit: Environmental Health			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	1	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Homelessness			
Speed - Yes:	0	Speed - No:	1
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	0	Outcome - No:	1
Complaint Handling - Yes:	0	Complaint Handling - No:	1
Business Unit: Housing Applications			
Speed - Yes:	3	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	2	Easily Understood - No:	1
Outcome - Yes:	2	Outcome - No:	1
Complaint Handling - Yes:	2	Complaint Handling - No:	1
Business Unit: Housing Benefit			
Speed - Yes:	7	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	7	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	7	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	7	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Legal Services			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	1	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Parking - Off-street			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	1	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Parking - On-street			
Speed - Yes:	2	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	2	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	2	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	2	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Recycling			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	1	Complaint Handling - No:	0
Business Unit: Refuse			
Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	0	Outcome - No:	1
Complaint Handling - Yes:	0	Complaint Handling - No:	1

Business Unit: Sports Centres Client

Speed - Yes:	1	Speed - No:	0
Easily Understood - Yes:	1	Easily Understood - No:	0
Outcome - Yes:	1	Outcome - No:	0
Complaint Handling - Yes:	1	Complaint Handling - No:	0

Total:

Speed - Yes:	39	Speed - No:	2
Easily Understood - Yes:	40	Easily Understood - No:	1
Outcome - Yes:	37	Outcome - No:	4
Complaint Handling - Yes:	36	Complaint Handling - No:	5

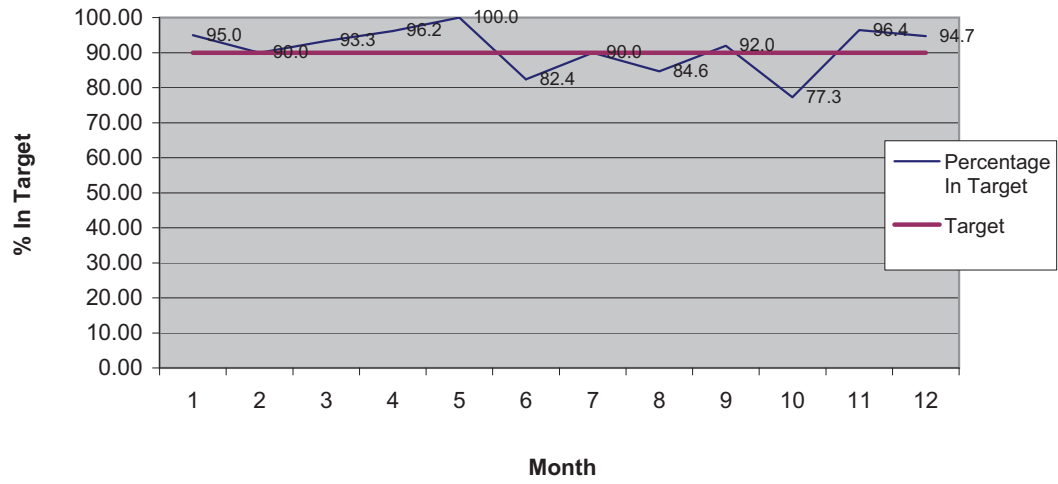
Speed - Yes:	95%
Easily Understood - Yes:	98%
Outcome - Yes:	90%
Complaint Handling - Yes:	88%

Complaints	Complaints Total	Feedback Logged
Building Control	1	0
Council Tax	17	15
Customer Service Centre	6	5
Development Management	11	2
Environmental Health	4	1
Green Space Contracts	2	0
Homelessness	1	1
Housing Applications	3	3
Housing Benefit	8	7
Housing Management	1	0
Internal Audit and Risk Management	1	0
Legal Services	1	1
Parking - Off-street	1	1
Parking - On-street	2	2
Recycling	1	1
Refuse	1	1
Sports Centres Client	3	1
Total for Complaint	64	41

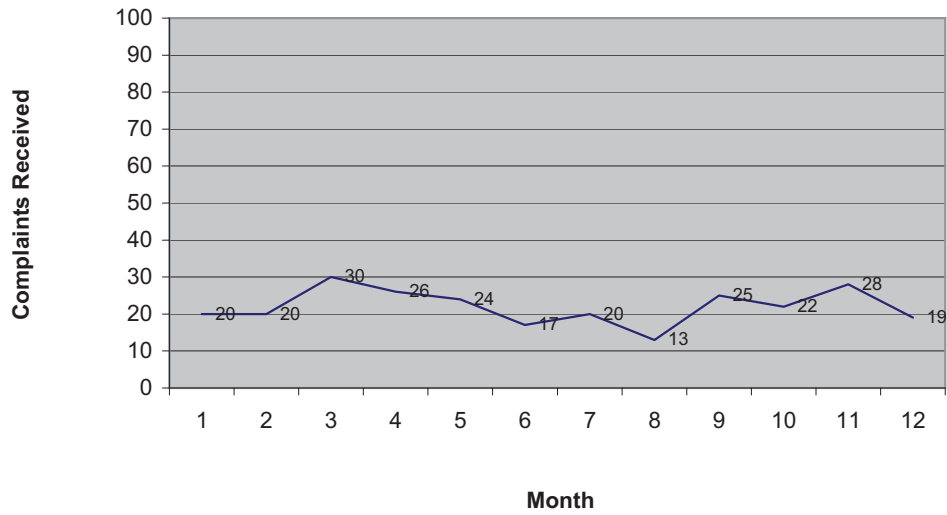
Service Improvements from 01/04/12 to 30/06/12

Business Unit	Type	Subject	Improvement
Customer Service Centre	Complaint	Data Protection Breach	Additional training provided to staff concerning Data Protection Breaches
Recycling	Complaint	Boxes	Visit by Inspector followed by discussion with contractor - instructions to crew re-issued
Sports Centres Client	Complaint	Risborough Springs Swim & Fitness Centre	PCL had taken action following Monday's incident including incident scenarios at the staff training on Thursday

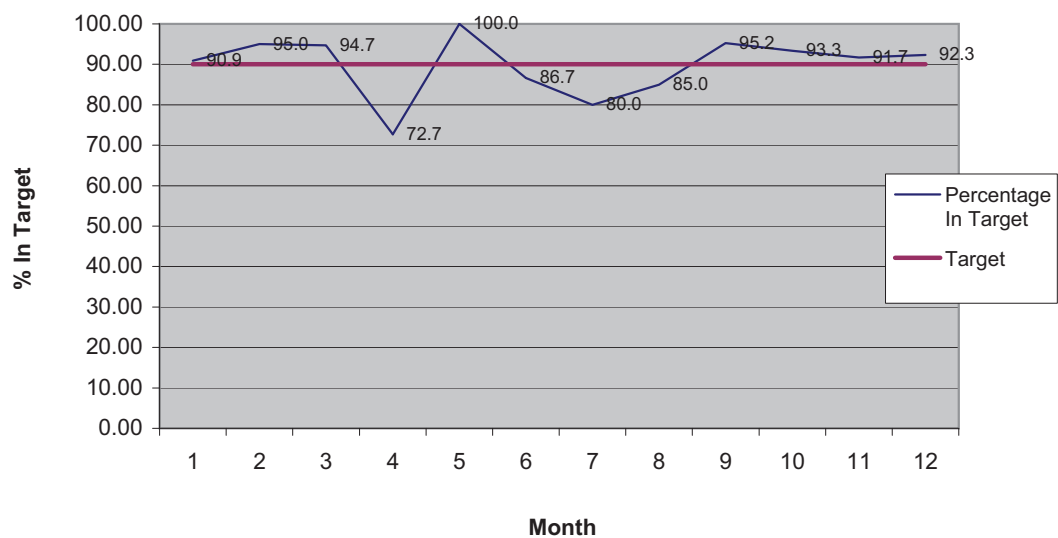
WDC Complaints in target 2010



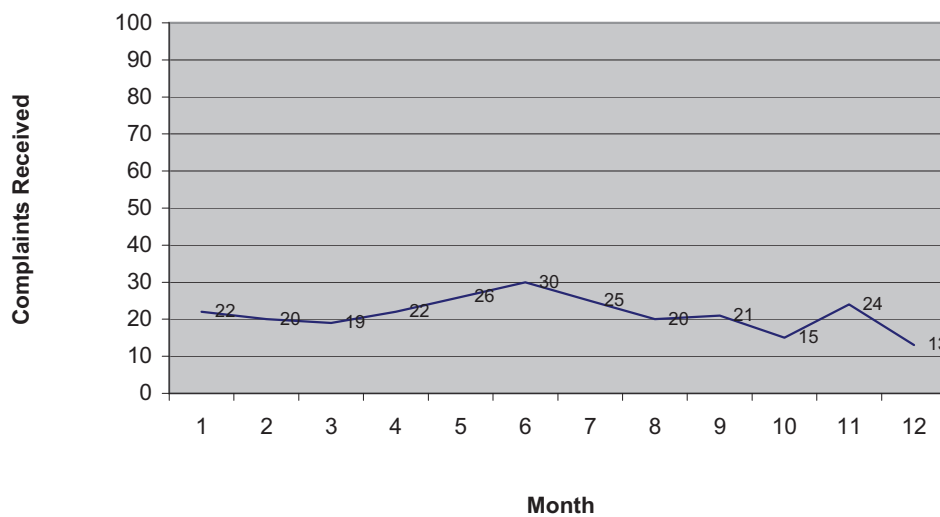
WDC Complaints Received 2010



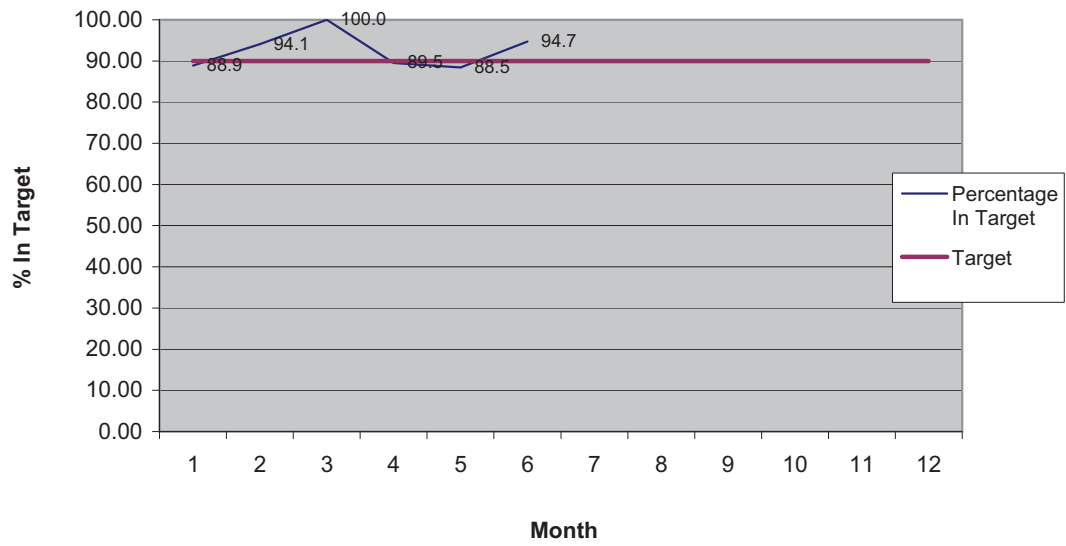
WDC Complaints in target 2011



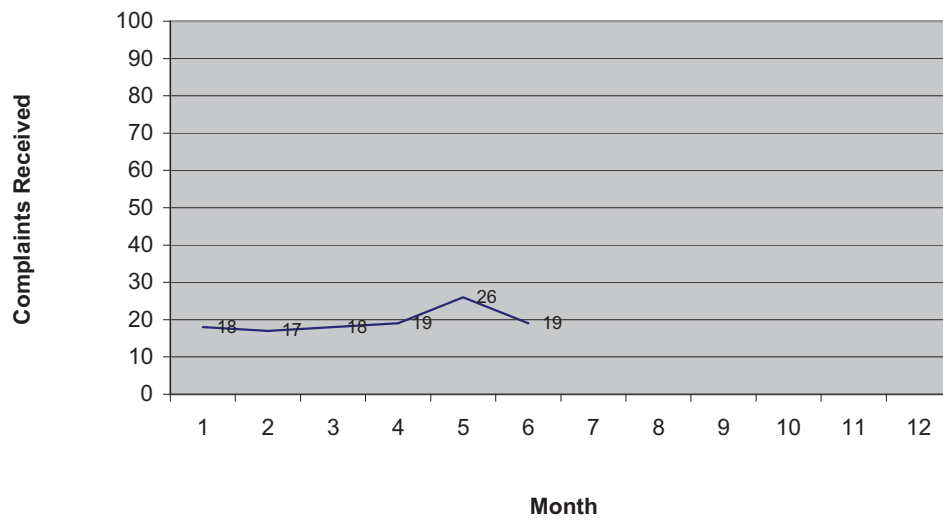
WDC Complaints Received 2011



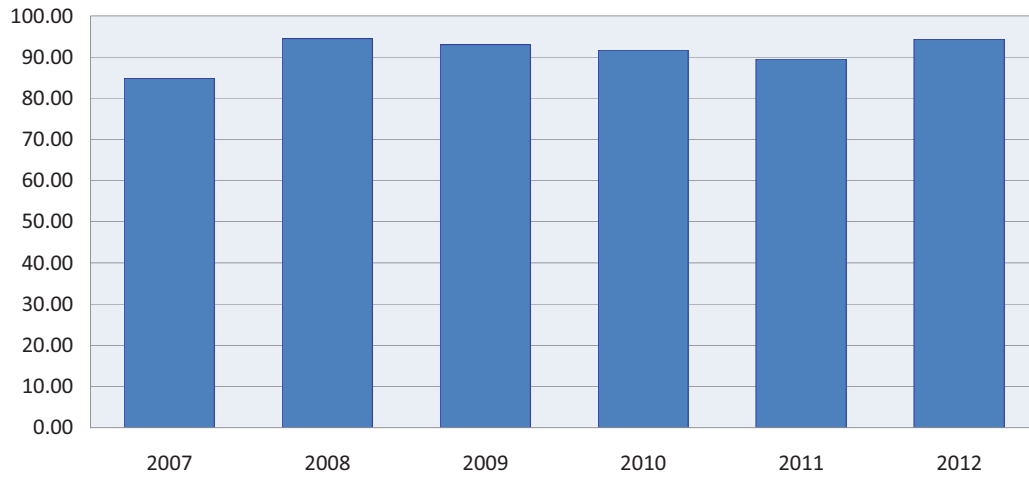
WDC Complaints in target 2012



WDC Complaints Received 2012



WDC Complaints In Target 2007 - 2012



**Wycombe District Council
Complaints/Compliments - Year on Year
Comparison**

	Quarter 1	Outturn Apr - Jun		Quarter 2	Outturn Jul - Sep		Quarter 3	Outturn Oct - Dec		Quarter 4	Outturn Jan-Mar	Year to date	% variance against target	
	Target for Q1			Target for Q2			Target for Q3			Target for Q4				
Compliments and Complaints														
2011-12 Year	n/a	79	n/a	n/a	94	n/a	n/a	60	n/a	n/a	55	233		
2012-13 Year	n/a	98	n/a	n/a										
2011-12 Year	n/a	79	n/a	n/a	67	n/a	n/a	53	n/a	n/a	53	199		
2012-13 Year	n/a	64	n/a	n/a										
2011-12 Year	90%	87.34%		90%	86.57%		90%	92.45%		90%	92.45%	89.29%	-0.71%	
2011-12 Year		69			58			49			49	225		
2011-12 Year		79			67			53			53	252		
2012-13 Year	90%	90.63%												
2012-13 Year		58												
2012-13 Year		64												
2011-12 Year	90%	96.43%		90%	100.00%		90%	88.89%		90%	88.89%	95.83%	5.83%	
2011-12 Year		27			17			24			24	92		

**Wycombe District Council
Complaints/Compliments - Year on Year
Comparison**

	Quarter 1	Outturn Apr - Jun		Quarter 2	Outturn Jul - Sep		Quarter 3	Outturn Oct - Dec		Quarter 4	Outturn Jan-Mar	Year to date	% variance against target	
	Target for Q1			Target for Q2			Target for Q3			Target for Q4				
2011-12 Year		28			17			27			27	96		
2012-13 Year	n/a	95.12%												
2012-13 Year		39												
2012-13 Year		41												
2011-12 Year	90%	96.43%		90%	82.35%		90%	77.78%		90%	88.89%	89.58%	-0.42%	
2011-12 Year		27			14			21			24	86		
2011-12 Year		28			17			27			27	96		
2012-13 Year	n/a	90.24%												
2012-13 Year		37												
2012-13 Year		41												
2011-12 Year	90%	96.43%		90%	95.56%		90%	81.48%		90%	88.89%	91.34%	1.34%	
2011-12 Year		27			43			22			24	116		
2011-12 Year		28			45			27			27	127		
2012-13 Year	n/a	87.80%												
2012-13 Year		36												
2012-13 Year		41												

**Wycombe District Council
Complaints/Compliments - Year on Year
Comparison**

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year to date	% variance against target
Target for Q1	Target for Q2	Target for Q3	Target for Q4	Year to date	% variance against target
Outturn Apr - Jun	Outturn Jul - Sep	Outturn Oct - Dec	Outturn Jan-Mar	Year to date	% variance against target

Symbols Used:	
	Exceeds target by more than 5%
	Within +/- 5% of target
	More than 5% below target

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Agenda Item 7 Appendix B

Local Government OMBUDSMAN

22 June 2012

By email

Ms Karen Satterford
Chief Executive
Wycombe District Council
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe HP11 1BB

Dear Ms Satterford

Annual Review Letter

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to me about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2012. I hope the information set out in the enclosed tables will be useful to you.

The statistics include the number of enquiries and complaints received by our Advice Team, the number forwarded by the Advice Team to my office, and decisions made on complaints about your authority. The decision descriptions have been changed to more closely follow the wording in our legislation and to give greater precision. Our guidance on statistics provides further explanation ([see our website](#)).

The statistics also show the time taken by your authority to respond to written enquiries.

I am pleased to say that I have no concerns about your authority's response times and there are no issues arising from the complaints that I want to bring to your attention.

Changes to our role

I am also pleased to have this opportunity to update you on changes to our role. Since April 2010 we have been exercising jurisdiction over the internal management of schools on a pilot basis in 14 local authority areas. This was repealed in the Education Act 2011 and the power restored to the Secretary of State for Education. During the short period of the pilot we believe we have had a positive impact on the way in which schools handle complaints. This was endorsed by independent research commissioned by the Department for Education which is available [on their website](#).

Our jurisdiction will end in July 2012 and all complaints about internal school matters will be completed by 31 January 2013.

From April 2013, as a result of the Localism Act 2011, local authority tenants will take complaints about their landlord to the Independent Housing Ombudsman (IHO). We are working with the IHO to ensure a smooth transition that will include information for local authority officers and members.

Supporting good local public administration

We launched a new series of Focus reports during 2011/12 to develop our role in supporting good local public administration and service improvement. They draw on the learning arising from our casework in specific service areas. Subjects have included school admissions, children out of school, homelessness and use of bankruptcy powers. The reports describe good practice and highlight what can go wrong and the injustice caused. They also make recommendations on priority areas for improvement.

We were pleased that a survey of local government revenue officers provided positive feedback on the bankruptcy focus report. Some 85% said they found it useful.

In July 2011, we also published a report with the Centre for Public Scrutiny about how complaints can feed into local authority scrutiny and business planning arrangements.

We support local complaint resolution as the most speedy route to remedy. Our training programme on effective complaint handling is an important part of our work in this area. In 2011/12 we delivered 76 courses to councils, reaching 1,230 individual learners.

We have developed our course evaluation to measure the impact of our training more effectively. It has shown that 87% of learners gained new skills and knowledge to help them improve complaint-handling practice, 83% made changes to complaint-handling practice after training, and 73% said the improvements they made resulted in greater efficiency.

Further details of publications and training opportunities are on [our website](#).

Publishing decisions

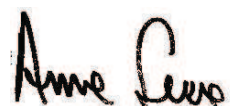
Following consultation with councils, we are planning to launch an open publication scheme during the next year where we will be publishing on our website the final decision statements on all complaints. Making more information publicly available will increase our openness and transparency, and enhance our accountability.

Our aim is to provide a comprehensive picture of complaint decisions and reasons for councils and the public. This will help inform citizens about local services and create a new source of information on maladministration, service failure and injustice.

We will publish a copy of this annual review with those of all other English local authorities on our website on 12 July 2012. This will be the same day as publication of our Annual Report 2011/12 where you will find further information about our work.

We always welcome feedback from councils and would be pleased to receive your views. If it would be helpful, I should be pleased to arrange a meeting for myself or a senior manager to discuss our work in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Seex". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Anne Seex
Local Government Ombudsman

LGO advice team

Enquiries and complaints received	Adult Care Services	Benefits & Tax	Corporate & Other Services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Highways & Transport	Housing	Planning & Development	Total
Advice given	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Premature complaints	1	3	1	0	0	2	2	9
Forwarded to Investigative team (resubmitted)	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	6
Forwarded to Investigative team (new)	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	7
Total	1	5	1	2	1	10	5	25

Investigative team - Decisions

No power to investigate	Not investigated		Investigated			Report	Total
	No reason to use exceptional power to investigate	Investigation not justified & Other	Not enough evidence of fault	No or minor injustice & Other	Injustice remedied during enquiries		
1	3	1	7	1	2	0	15

Response times to first enquiries	No of first enquiries	Avg no of days to respond
	9	34.1

Agenda Item 8

LOCAL STANDARDS HEARING PANELS

To receive the minutes of the Local Standards Hearing Panels held on 12 June 2012 (**APPENDIX A**).

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Local Standards Hearing Panel Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 12th June, 2012

Time: 10.30 - 11.30 am

PRESENT:

Parish Councillor John Sherlock, Mrs Eileen Springford and Cllr Ms Julia Wassell

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Mrs E Springford be appointed
Chairman of the Meeting.

Mrs E Springford in the Chair.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 QUORUM

The Chairman confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Section 100B(2) of
the Local Government Act 1972 the press and
public be excluded from the meeting during the
consideration of Minutes 5 & 6 because of their
reference to matters which contain exempt
information as defined as follows:

**Minute No 5 – Consideration of Investigating
Officer’s Report re Standards Complaint IA44.**

Information presented to a standards committee,
or sub-committee of a standards committee, set

up to consider any matter under regulations 16 to 20 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, or referred under section 58(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2000 (Paragraph 7A & 7C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972).

It was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because the distress caused to the individual would outweigh the public interest in disclosure.

Minute No 6 – Consideration of Investigating Officer’s Report re Standards Complaint IA 53.

Information presented to a standards committee, or sub-committee of a standards committee, set up to consider any matter under regulations 16 to 20 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, or referred under section 58(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2000 (Paragraph 7C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972).

It was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because the distress caused to the individual would outweigh the public interest in disclosure.

5 CONSIDERATION OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER'S REPORT RE STANDARDS COMPLAINT IA 44

The Members of the Panel confirmed that they had read in detail the report of the Investigating Officer as appended, and considered the summary of findings contained therein.

The Panel felt that a Local Hearing into the allegations should be scheduled, referral of the matter to the Adjudication Panel for determination was not appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the matter should be considered at a hearing of the Local Standards Panel conducted under Regulation 18 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

6 CONSIDERATION OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER'S REPORT RE STANDARDS COMPLAINT IA 53

Having read fully the report prepared by the investigating officer in respect of these allegations, the Panel accepted the reasoning and the conclusion arrived at by the investigating officer in her report that the subject member had not breached the Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED: That in respect of the complaint concerned, the investigating officer's finding of no failure in respect of compliance with the Code of Conduct of the authority concerned, be accepted.

It was noted that under the appropriate legislation officers would write to the subject Member giving them the option as to whether a notice in respect of the findings of 'no breach' be published in the local press. In the event that the subject member opted for this publication of a notice, if that Member so wished, the Panel agreed that the notice could also be published on the Council's website.

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Peter Druce - Democratic Services
David Ruddock - District Solicitor

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Agenda Item 9

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)

Agenda Item 10

URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

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