



REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 4 JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Policy & Resources Committee is asked to consider the Complaints Annual Report 2017-18.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (51) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to developing and monitoring public relations, public reporting, publicity and corporate communications.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The meeting is invited to consider the content of the Complaints Annual Report, seek clarification on any points arising, and otherwise approve the report. The annual report will then be submitted to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO).**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 All councils are required to publish their performance against the national performance indicators set by the SPSO. The attached report presents our performance against these performance indicators for the 2017-18 reporting period. **(Appendix)**
- 3.2 Complaints handling is part of the council's performance management framework. Members receive six-monthly updates on complaints performance through routine reports to service committees.
- 3.3 Complaints received per 1,000 head population significantly increased to 5.75 in 2017-18 compared to 4.31 in 2016-17. The Scottish average is 8.3 per 1,000 head population. This increase can be viewed as positive as it reflects continued public confidence in reporting complaints. The focus of complaint

handling is on changes and improvements to services and procedures as a result of the consideration of complaints.

- 3.4 During 2017-18 66% of complaints were dealt with at frontline resolution stage compared to 30% dealt with at the investigation stage. Although a reduction from the 72% dealt with at frontline in 2016-17, the proportion is an increase of 15% from 2015-16 and over 20% more than in 2014-15 when fewer than half of all complaints were resolved at this stage (46%). This demonstrates that our staff are seeking early resolution with complainants.
- 3.5 For all the complaints closed during 2017-18, at both stages one and two, 40% were fully 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' overall, compared to 46% in 2016-17, 43% in 2015-16 and 33% in 2014-15. This shows that a greater proportion of all complaints result in an opportunity to learn and improve the way services are being delivered.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This report supports the Scottish Government's national outcomes, in particular the commitment to be accountable to the community as stated: "Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs."

Effective handling of complaints is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in the Moray Council Corporate Plan 2023. As part of the Improving Value the Complaints Handling Process enables us to be open about our performance, including opportunities to improve, and also to learn from our experiences and failures, and change accordingly.

(b) Policy and Legal

There is a statutory requirement to report to the SPSO annually on the performance indicators. The 'Social Work' complaints procedure, is now aligned into the model Complaints Handling Procedures.

(c) Financial implications

It is not anticipated that there will be any financial implications as the recommendations in this report relate to publicising performance information.

(d) Risk Implications

Performance reporting is a statutory requirement of the SPSO's Complaints Handling Policy. Failure to report may result in SPSO making a declaration of non-compliance against the Council. Non-compliance with the statutory duty relating to national standards being adopted would present risk in terms of reputational damage and a loss of public confidence in our ability to deliver quality improvements based

on complaints analysis, and ultimately to maintaining and improving service standards.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications related to this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications related to this report.

(g) Equalities

The Equal Opportunities Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and the equalities impact has been identified as uncertain.

The Equal Opportunities Officer has recommended that where services are experiencing high volumes of complaints, the management of respective services should arrange to identify common complaint issues and any learning arising. This will help to ensure that complaints are not arising from situations where customer diversity needs have not been considered or addressed, e.g. disability or cultural issues.

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on the contents of annual report. The Performance Management Officer and Equal Opportunities Officers have been consulted in the preparation the Complaints Annual Report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Complaints Annual Report presents our performance against the national performance indicators set by SPSO.

Author of Report: John Black, Complaints Officer

Background Papers: SPSO PIs

Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-19