



## Report of the Head of Digital & Customer Services

Governance & Audit Committee – 28 February 2024

### Annual Complaints & Compliments Reports 2022-23

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide assurance on the complaints handling process for 2022-23 and highlight compliments received from the public.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Corporate Complaints Policy Social Services Complaints Policy Transformation & Financial Resilience Well-being Objective of the Corporate Plan Successful and Sustainable Swansea
<b>Consultation:</b>	Finance and Legal.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sarah Lackenby
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Stephen Holland
<b>For Information</b>	

#### 1. Background and Context

- 1.1 These two reports at appendices A and B detail performance on the operation of the Corporate Complaints Policy and Social Services Complaints Policy between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 1.2 This year the Complaints reports have a new format in response to a request from the Governance & Audit Committee.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that complaints are a valuable resource, helping us to understand the needs and concerns of members of the public and to improve services. All complaints are taken very seriously and provide valuable customer insight.
- 1.4 An internal audit of Complaints began at the end of 2022-23 and concluded in 2023-24 with the overall assurance level of substantial.

## **2. Integrated Assessment Implications**

2.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

2.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

- This report is for information only. Any activities following this report will be subject to the IIA process as required.

## **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 The additional cost of running the service in 2022-23 includes:

- £11,013 in financial redress for Adult Services, compared with the £12,016 in 2021-22.
- £250 in financial re-dress for Child & Family Services, which was the first payment made in the past four years.

## **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 S.81 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (as amended by the Local Government and Elections (Wales)) Act 2021 provides that:

‘(1)A local authority must appoint a committee (a “governance and audit committee”) to—

.....

(da) review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively,

(db) make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively,

.....’

- 4.2 Part 5 of The Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, prescribes the records required to be kept in relation to social service specific complaints, and the publication of information relating to the same.

#### ‘PART 5 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

##### Monitoring

20. Each local authority must keep a record of—

(a) each complaint it receives;

(b) the outcome of each complaint;

(c) whether the local authority has complied with the time limits specified in regulations 16 to 19;

with the intention of monitoring its compliance with these Regulations.

##### Annual Report

21.—(1) Each local authority must prepare an annual report, which must include details of the records kept in accordance with regulation 20, on its performance in the handling and investigation of complaints for the purposes of—

(a) monitoring compliance with these Regulations; and

(b) improving the handling and consideration of complaints.’

**Background Papers:** None

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2022-23

Appendix B Social Services Complaints Annual Report 2022-23