



**To/  
Councillor David Hopkins  
Cabinet Member for Delivery and  
Performance**

**BY EMAIL**

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Overview & Scrutiny

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19 March 2020

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Delivery and Performance. The letter concerns the meeting on 2 March 2020 and Corporate Complaints Annual Report for 2018/19.

Dear Councillor Hopkins,

On the 2 March 2020, the Panel met to discuss the Corporate Complaints Annual Report for 2018/19. The Panel are grateful to you and to Officers for attending to discuss the report.

Overall, we agreed with you that this is a positive annual report with some good news. That no significant issues or trends raising concern were highlighted. We recognise that the Council is doing very well in view of the number of complaints and resources we have to deal with them. Whilst complaints are increasing, it is also a sign of openness to complaints and ease in which people can make a complaint to the Council.

We endorsed the compliments and positive feedback received by the Council reflected in the report, including from some of the most vulnerable people we are dealing with. We especially highlighted those for local area co-ordinators and West Cross day service.

We queried the time taken to prepare the annual report following completion of the year in question (i.e. end March 2019) but it was explained this was normal and reporting will always be a year behind, and because of the detailed work required in order to meet Ombudsman requirements.

We were pleased to see that only 1 of 83 complaints to the Ombudsman were upheld. We queried what is meant by 9 being resolved by 'quick fix / voluntary settlement'. The Chief Transformation Officer said that this would vary depending on the nature of the complaint but undertook to provide more information on this in writing.

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We heard the Freedom Of Information (FOI) requests report shows that 103 of the 1403 FOI requests were completely refused. We were interested to understand the grounds upon which requests could be refused. The Convener also recommended that future reports should show the actual cost incurred by the Council through dealing with FOI, and their impact on the budget, as a matter of public interest.

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but can we please have a written response to the following points by 9 April 2020.

- 1) What is meant by 9 complaints being resolved by 'quick fix / voluntary settlement'?
- 2) Can you provide us with further information about the grounds in which FOI can be refused.
- 3) We recommend that future FOI Annual Reports show the actual cost incurred by the Council through dealing with FOI, and their impact on the budget.

Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Chris Holley**  
**Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel**  
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