

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Corporate and Policy Services	Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel	5/10/05

ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN 2004/05

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the Panel with an analysis of complaints referred to the Chief Executive and Local Government Ombudsman in 2004/05.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. The subject of complaints clearly has a very strong link to the Council's corporate priority of serving the customer better. Complaints can be a very useful source of learning in seeking to improve the services we offer in the future.

RISK ISSUES

3. The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy		Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial		Operational	✓
People		Other	

BACKGROUND

4. Complaints can be particularly damaging to the Council's reputation and it is important that we deal with complainants promptly, courteously and thoroughly. Even where a complaint is not upheld it is important that we explain the reasons for our decision fully and provide advice on further routes the complainant can take if they are still not satisfied.
5. As indicated above complaints are an important source of learning for us. We must recognise this and seek to improve procedures and practices where appropriate.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

6. The Council's complaints procedure has three levels. In the first instance a complainant is invited to complain to the Service Head responsible for the activity/service which has generated the complaint.
7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received they are advised of their right to refer the matter to the Chief Executive (the second level). These complaints are investigated on behalf of the Chief Executive by Corporate and Policy Services.



8. If following this investigation the complainant is still not satisfied they are invited to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (the third level). The Ombudsman is an independent third party and their services are free. Corporate and Policy Services act as the contact point between the ombudsman and the Council and ensure all relevant information is provided to facilitate the investigation.

ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS 2004 – 05

9. Unfortunately we do not currently capture data on complaints made to Service Units at level one. It is, however, hoped that this will change as the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is introduced as part of the ongoing development of the Contact Centre.
10. Appendices A and B do, however, provide an analysis of complaints to the Chief Executive and Ombudsman respectively during 1004/05.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

- 11 None.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

12. None.

RECOMMENDATION

13. The panel are invited to consider and comment on the report. You may also wish to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issues raised would be appropriate.

TIM RIGNALL
HEAD OF CORPORATE AND POLICY SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Tim Rignall	5140	1.9.05	CPSREP/90171JM2