

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Transformation	Standards Committee	4 March 2010

LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND TIMESCALES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To formalise and clarify the local assessment of complaints process for those involved.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- Make any required amendments and adopt the enclosed flow diagrams,
- Publish the flow diagrams on the Council's website,
- Adopt performance promises at various stages of the process:
 - complete its initial assessment of an allegation within an average of 15 working days and send out notification to all parties within an average of 2 working days,
 - complete its review of an allegation within an average of 15 working days and send out notification to all parties within an average of 2 working days.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	y
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	y

BACKGROUND

- At previous meetings of the Standards Committee Members discussed the need for clarity and greater understanding of the local assessment of complaints process and timescales involved.

LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- Enclosed with this report are two flow diagrams which aim to formalise and clarify the local assessment of complaints process. It is intended to publish these on the Council's website to enable both Members and the public to access them.
- The flow diagrams set out the process and highlight key points. Members' views are requested on any amendments to the flow diagrams to make them as user friendly as possible.

PERFORMANCE PROMISES – ASSESSMENT

9. The Committee also discussed the potential for certain performance promises. Standards for England state “The assessment sub-committee should complete its initial assessment of an allegation within an average of 20 working days, to reach a decision on what should happen with the complaint”. The proposal is that Chorley Council should to complete its initial assessment of an allegation within an average of 15 working days.
10. Standards for England “suggest that the standards committee sends out its decision notice within five working days of the decision being made”. The proposal is that Chorley Council should send out notification to all parties within an average of 2 working days.

PERFORMANCE PROMISES – REVIEW

11. Standards for England state “The review sub-committee must carry out its review within a maximum of three months of receiving the request. We recommend that the review sub-committee adopts a policy of undertaking the review within the same timescale as the initial assessment decision is taken, aiming to complete the review within an average of 20 working days”. The proposal is that Chorley Council should to complete its review of an allegation within an average of 15 working days.
12. Standards for England “recommend that the review sub-committee sends out its decision notice within five working days of the decision being made”. The proposal is that Chorley Council should send out notification to all parties within an average of 2 working days.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

13. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	y	No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

14. These flow charts follow the model set out by Standards for England but provide more information on timescales and should enable members of the public and Councillors to easily understand the process and likely timeframe for progression.

GARY HALL
DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Local Assessment of Complaints – Standards for England	September 2008	http://www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/media/Local%20assessment%20of%20complaints%20guidance.pdf	Standards for England website
Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Ruth Rimmington	5118	9 February 2010	Flow Diagrams