

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

### **PART I – DELEGATED**

#### **5. CORPORATE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS AND VEXATIOUS & UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS POLICIES (EHoS)**

##### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to propose amendments and updates to the Council's Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy and to propose a new Vexatious & Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.

##### **2 Details**

- 2.1 The proposed changes to the Council's Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy include:

2.1.1 Inclusion of how the Council records Compliments

2.1.2 Updating of relevant staff details including the addition of the Executive Head of Services

2.1.3 Removal of fax and introduction of online form as ways to make a complaint

2.1.4 Additional information around handling process at stage one and stage two of the process

2.1.5 Reformatting, reordering and layout changes

2.2 A separate policy covering how the Council deals with Vexatious and Unreasonably Persistent Complaints has been prepared. This provides greater detail and clarity on how the Council will manage this process and what customers can expect.

##### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To provide greater clarity and transparency on our compliments and complaints handling process.

##### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are not within the Council's agreed policy.

4.2 The purpose of this proposed policy is to update and amend the Council's Corporate Compliments and Complaints policy and create a separate more detailed policy of how the Council deals with vexatious and unreasonably persistent complaints.

##### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council should deal with complaints fairly and impartially and make its complaints procedure as accessible as possible. It must also safeguard that procedure against unreasonable complainants' behaviour when it occurs and take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of its staff and the integrity of its processes.

5.2 The council should take into account the guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on “Effective Complaint Handling for Local Authorities”.

## 6 Equal Opportunities Implications

### 6.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

## 7 Environmental Implications

7.1 An increased focus on the use of digital communication for making a complaint, however making a complaint needs to be accessible for all and so we will continue to receive complaints via letter and telephone.

## 8 Customer Services Centre Implications

8.1 Although the responsibility to provide responses will remain with the relevant Head of Service, the administration and logging of Corporate Compliments and Complaints will be the responsibility of the Customer Service Centre.

## 9 Communications and Website Implications

9.1 The website will be updated to include the updated policies and a compliments and complaints form for customers to self-serve.

9.2 The updated policies will be shared with staff.

## 10 Financial, Staffing, Community Safety, and Public Health Implications

10.1 None specific.

## 11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

11.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council’s duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Customer Service Centre service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response	Risk Rating
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			<i>(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)</i>	<i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Not having an appropriate and up to date complaint's policy and way of managing complaints	The council is required to have a complaints procedure. Not having a clear and relevant policy will diminish public confidence in the Council	Annual review and update of the policy and process	Terminate	2 (Low)

11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

<b>Very Likely</b> ----- <b>Likelihood</b> ----- <b>Remote</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Very High</b>	<b>Very High</b>
	4	8	12	16
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Very High</b>
	3	6	9	12
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
	2	4	6	8
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
	1	2	3	4
	<b>Impact</b>			
	Low	-----▶		Unacceptable

**Impact Score**

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

**Likelihood Score**

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Marginal)

1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

## 12 Recommendation

12.1 That:

Policy and Resources Committee:

Agree and adopt the amended Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy

Agree and adopt the new Vexatious & Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy

Report prepared by: Josh Sills – Head of Customer Experience

### Data Quality

Data sources:

Compliments and Complaints log

Data checked by:

Helen Ford – CSC Team Manager

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

### Background Papers

1. Current Council Complaints Procedure

### APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy
2. Proposed Vexatious & Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy