

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>19 JUNE 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE</b>
<b>Responsible Officers:</b>	<b>LAURA GRIFFITHS, GROUP MANAGER – LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b>  <b>PHILIP O'BRIEN</b> <b>GROUP MANAGER – TRANSFORMATION, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>This report provides a further update following a review of how corporate complaints and compliments are recorded and reported corporately (excluding complaints relating to Social Services).</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a further update to the Governance and Audit Committee on the current complaints handling process and a proposal on the way all corporate complaints and compliments will be monitored, recorded and reported going forward.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 A report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to note the Authority's corporate complaints process and to determine whether the Committee wished to make any recommendations in relation to the Authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.
- 2.2 The Committee raised and discussed a number of issues, including the following:
- The importance of capturing complaints made to Councillors.
  - The need for a robust definition of a complaint. That it could be worth discussing the issue with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
  - The need to ensure that agreed timelines for the resolution of a complaint are met and that where this is not possible the reasons are captured and followed up.
  - The need to address issues surrounding the costs of non-compliance in respect of services offered by the Council.

- The need to ensure as many identified officers that deal directly with complaints are brought into the new system and that they operate as a virtual team to ensure consistency and clarity in the operation of the system.
- Capturing compliments are also important to positively support the culture in the local authority, reducing variance and promoting innovation.
- The importance of maintaining the new system and ensuring continuity of service if officers leave the authority.

### 3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Following the previous Committee meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the recommendations were discussed further with the Group Manager, Legal and Democratic Services who manages the corporate complaints function.
- 3.2 It has been clarified that any complaint made to an Elected Member would be appropriately logged as a Member Referral under the Members' Portal. Complaints from members of the public about Elected Members are within the remit of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).
- 3.3 The definition of a 'complaint' under the Council's Concerns and Complaints Policy is *"An expression of dissatisfaction with a service we have provided or where an individual feels they haven't been provided with a service they were entitled to from us"*. The Policy was reviewed and revised in line with the PSOW model complaints policy and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Policy incorporates the PSOW Statement of Principles namely that the complaints process should be: (1) complainant focussed (2) fair and objective (3) simple (4) timely and effective (5) accountable (6) committed to continuous improvement. There is no change to the current approach (informal and formal stage) which will remain with the right to then escalate a complaint to the PSOW should the complainant be dissatisfied with the Authority's response. The current Policy was reviewed in July 2024 and is published on the Council's website and internally on the intranet.
- 3.4 The Information Team has developed a process to monitor timescales, the effectiveness of the complaints process and how complaints data is being used to improve services and delivery of care. It is proposed that services then consider any emerging themes and identify any service improvements required as a result of concerns raised. The information identified will then be used to contribute to service development which could include additional training, changes to internal procedures, increased monitoring etc.
- 3.5 Whilst there will be the ability to capture the costs of non-compliance within the form/process, this will require further internal discussions to understand how best to capture this to ensure consistency across all service areas who may need to provide this information. Therefore this element will go live within the form once the process to capture this information is discussed and agreed.
- 3.6 The form and process is still in the process of being developed. Once the form and process is complete, additional work is required to look at the data extraction integrations to provide a full specification for ICT to explore the reporting developments to enable the project to move into user testing and go-live. A copy of the high level project plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.7 A list of all staff who will need to access the new complaint system is being collated and cross referenced against the list of staff who have completed the corporate mandatory corporate complaints e-learning module. Those staff who have not completed the e-learning module will be contacted to request them to complete the training ahead of them being set up to access the corporate complaints system.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

#### **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 were considered in the preparation of this report. The monitoring of corporate complaints and the successful resolution of those complaints is consistent with the five ways of working within the Act as it supports the provision of high quality and more effective services to the public across all service areas. In addition, it enables each service to focus on areas of concern, to improve services and to monitor performance, ensure that any trends are identified and dealt with to be avoided in the future and to ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently and fairly across all service areas.

By managing complaints effectively through to successful resolution, this assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives:

- A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
- A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
- A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
- A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

#### **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 Reviewing, improving and streamlining business processes is important to help protect and sustain the environment over the long term and in line with our climate change ambitions.

#### **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 All complaints received where there is safeguarding concern will be managed under Bridgend County Borough Council's Safeguarding Policy. This will safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and to ensure that effective practices are in place throughout the Council and its commissioned services.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report as the system will be developed using current resources and will be reviewed as part of the corporate approach to transformation.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to note the update on the corporate complaints and compliment process and digital solution.

## **Background documents**

None

Appendix 1

Title: Corporate Complaints											
Overall project completion						38.14	%				
ID	Action	Owner	Baseline Start Date	Target Completion Date	No. tasks	Completed tasks	%age complete	No. tasks Green	No. tasks Amber	No. tasks Red	No. tasks NYS
1.0	Start Up	SD	12/07/2024	23/01/2025	3	3	100.0	0	0	0	0
2.0	Review	Proj Team	11/08/2024	21/11/2024	9	9	100.0	0	0	0	0
3.0	Form development	Proj Team	23/01/2025	TBC	17	9	58.2	2	0	0	6
4.0	Staff training - Audit requirement	E&I	23/04/2025	TBC	7	1	26.9	2	0	0	4
5.0	Report development	E&I / ICT	13/03/2025	TBC	5	1	20.0	0	0	0	4
6.0	User Acceptance Testing	Proj Team	TBC	TBC	6	0	0.0	0	0	0	6
7.0	Go-Live	LC	TBC	TBC	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	5
8.0	Project closure	LC	TBC	TBC	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	5