

**Urgency Committee of the Full Council**  
Meeting to be held on 17 January 2012

Electoral Division affected: All
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**Management of unreasonable complaints**  
(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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**Executive Summary**

The adoption of a corporate policy for dealing with unreasonably persistent complaint/complainant behaviour.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to agree:

1. That the Council adopt the policy set out at Appendix 'A' to deal with unreasonable complaint behaviour, and
2. Subject to the policy at 1. above being agreed, to also approve consequential changes to the Corporate Complaints Procedure, as set out at Appendix 'B'.

**Background and Advice**

The Council has recently dealt with a longstanding complaint through the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in which the complainant had made a large number of complaints (over 100 in total) about a social care issue. The Council had itself dealt with the core issues of the complaint through its own procedures and had eventually declared the complainant "vexatious".

Although the LGO did not find the Council at fault for any of the core issues of the complaint, she did find that the way in which the Council had responded to the complainant was flawed in that it did not comply with her most recent published guidance on dealing with unreasonably persistent/vexatious complaints.

The LGO suggested that it would be helpful for the Council to have a stand alone 'overarching' policy to deal with unreasonable complaint behaviour rather than rely on separate provision within its various complaints policies.

Accordingly, the draft policy attached at Appendix 'A', which complies with latest guidance issued by the LGO, is recommended for approval. If the new policy is agreed, a number of consequential changes are required to the Council's Corporate

Complaints Procedure to reflect the new provisions. A copy of the revised Procedure is attached at Appendix 'B'.

### **Consultations**

The Local Government Ombudsman has been consulted on the proposed policy and has confirmed that it is appropriate.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

Failure to accept the LGO's suggestion may lead to further criticism should the Council again have to invoke existing procedures to deal with unreasonable complainants.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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Nil

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A