



Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

 Alison.Hall-Wright@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present Cabinet with the 2024/25 Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report and self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which the Council is required to publish and submit to the Housing Ombudsman.

Recommendations

That Cabinet provide feedback on the 2024/25 Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report and the Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code for submission to the Housing Ombudsman.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision? Y

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? N

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing
(delete as appropriate)

Which wards are impacted? All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 During 2024/25 the Housing Ombudsman agreed compensation payments totalling £5,150 which we meet from existing budgets within the Housing Revenue Account.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There is a requirement for this report to be presented to Cabinet so that the Housing Ombudsman can be assured that the report is a true reflection of the Council's complaints handling process.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with the 2024/25 Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report which is attached at Appendix 2 and the Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which is attached at Appendix 3. This is a mandatory requirement of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 2.2 In 2024/25 the Housing Directorate received 233 Stage 1 complaints compared with 284 in 2023/24. The number of complaints escalated to Stage 2 in 2024/25 was 18 compared with 39 in 2023/24. There has been a positive reduction in the total number of complaints received which is reflective of the continuous service improvements Housing strives to achieve.
- 2.3 In 2024/25 the Housing Directorate responded to 84% of stage 1 complaints on time compared with only 39% in 2023/24 and all stage 1 complaints received since September 2024 have been responded to on time. In 2024/25 all stage 2 complaints were responded to on time compared with only 26% in 2023/24.

2.4. The first section of the annual report provides information regarding:

- The Council's complaints process
- The number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received
- The average time taken to close complaints
- Whether a complaint was upheld or not
- The root cause for complaints
- Summary information taken from the Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report which is attached at Appendix 2

2.4 The second section of the report focuses on the learning the Council has taken from the complaints it has received and the service improvements that have been made as a result of customer feedback. This is essential to ensure the Council does not continue to receive complaints on recurring issues.

2.5 The Housing Ombudsman recently reviewed the Council's Housing Feedback Policy and identified where amendments were needed to ensure the Council is fully compliant with their Complaint Handling Code. These amendments have been fully implemented so as detailed in the self-assessment attached at Appendix 3 the Council is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Key areas for Cabinet to consider are the complaints data that has been provided reflects the complaints handling process which the Council has in place.
- 3.2. That Cabinet are assured that the service improvements being implemented will reduce the number of complaints received on recurring issues.
- 3.3. The Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. To not present the report and self-assessment to Cabinet for their feedback but the Council would then not meet the Housing Ombudsman's requirement that the information is considered by the governing body.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To provide Cabinet with the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2024/25 Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report and self-

assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code prior to submission to the Housing Ombudsman

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25
- 6.2 Appendix 2 - Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report
- 6.3 Appendix 3 – Self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code