

18 October 2023 at 7pm

**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Duke Street,
Chelmsford, CM1 1JE**

Membership

Councillor C. Davidson (Chair)

and Councillors

H. Clark, D. Eley, J. Potter, S. Rajesh, J. Sosin, and M. Steel

Parish Council Representatives

Councillor K. Bentley (South Woodham Ferrers Town Council)

Councillor K. Golla (Chelmsford Garden Community Council)

Councillor P. Jackson (Great Waltham Parish Council)

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There is also an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance and details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please telephone Jan Decena in the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606523 or email jan.decena@chelmsford.gov.uk

Governance Committee

18 October 2023

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023

3. Declaration of Interests

All Members are reminded that they must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

4. Chair's Announcements

5. Monitoring Officer Report

6. Senior Responsible Officer's report in relation to the Council's RIPA arrangements

7. Information Governance Update

8. Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review

9. Annual Whistleblowing Report

10. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

11. Update on Register of Interests in City and Parish tier Councils

12. Work Programme

13. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

21 June 2023 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Davidson (Chair)

Councillors H. Clark, D. Eley, J. Potter, J. Sosin and M. Steel

Also in attendance –

Parish Councillor P Jackson

Independent Persons –

Mr P Jeremiah

Mr D Lamb

Mrs P Mills

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rajesh and the Independent Person Mrs Gosling.

2. Election of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor D. Eley be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2023/24.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 8th March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

5. Public Question Time

No questions were asked or statements made by members of the public.

6. Chair's Announcements

No announcements were made.

7. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

The Committee considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Group in relation to proposed changes to the City Council's Constitution. The Committee were informed that the Constitution was reviewed at least annually, to ensure it remained completed, upto date and reflected current practice and legislation. The Committee were reminded of the existing process, where recommendations went from the Working Group, to the Governance Committee, the Cabinet (where appropriate) and then onto Full Council.

It was noted that two further proposed changes since March 2023 had been initiated by officers and had been agreed by the Working Group on the 7th of June. The Committee heard that the two changes related to a new delegation in relation to neighbourhood planning referenda and modifications in relation to fees and charges and were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. The Committee heard that the changes would prevent delays in the neighbourhood planning process and the amended financial rules reflected a clarified approach to setting fees and charges, in line with other financial rules.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers confirmed that;

- The limits referred to were not reviewed often and that explained why in this case of realigning them, there was a significant change in the figure.
- The limits were in effect being lined up with those already available to the Cabinet, for clarity and it was also noted that larger financial decisions would continue to be taken by the Cabinet or Council.
- The figures were in line with those at other local authorities.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the Constitution

(7.10pm to 7.23pm)

8. Annual Report of the Governance Committee

The Committee received for its approval its Annual Report for 2022-23 before its submission to Council. Officers noted that some acronyms should be removed before it is seen by Council to ensure it is clear to read for everyone.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Governance Committee for 2022-23 be approved and submitted to the Council.

(7.24pm to 7.26pm)

9. Work Programme

The Committee received its work programme for 2023-24.

RESOLVED that the work programme of the Committee be noted.

(7.27pm to 7.28pm)

Exclusion of the Public

Resolved that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for Items 11 and 12 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

10. Parish and Town Council Representatives on the Committee

The Committee received a report on the need to appoint two Parish Councillor representatives to the Committee. Nominations had been sought from Parish Tier Councils. Five expressions of interests were received which were then considered by the Committee. The Committee considered the five nominations and discussed the merits of each one.

The Committee agreed that the past experience of Cllr Bentley, as a previous City Councillor on the Committee, would be very beneficial and provide some continuity. The Committee also felt that Cllr Golla would be a sensible appointment, as they are a new Councillor and would bring a different perspective to Cllr Bentley, especially as they are from the new Chelmsford Garden Community Council.

RESOLVED that;

1. The Committee appointed Councillors Bentley and Golla as Parish Tier Councillor representatives.

(7.29pm to 7.53pm)

11. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Monitoring Officer's Report

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:
Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer,
email: lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606560

Purpose

To update members on the current position in relation to standards complaints, city councillor training in relation to the Code of Conduct. Governance Committee member training and an update in relation to Best Practice Recommendation 15.

Recommendations

1. To note the current statistical information as to complaints made and agree this should be published on the Council's website as set out in Appendix 1.
 2. To note the position in relation to councillor and governance committee training.
 3. To note that meetings between Senior officers and Group Leaders have resumed.
-

1. Standards Complaints & training

- 1.1. The Appendix to this report sets out the latest statistical data related to standards complaints.
- 1.2. Members will note that there has been 1 new complaint since the May 2023 elections. All previous outstanding complaints received during the previous term of office were concluded prior to the elections.
- 1.3. Subject to any questions raised, the Committee is asked to confirm that this information should be published as set out in Recommendation 1.
- 1.4. In relation to code of conduct training, all 57 serving city councillors have attended code of conduct training. Following a recent meeting with parish tier clerks and a request for further code of conduct training to be provided arrangements are being made for two further parish tier councillor sessions to be provided.
- 1.5. As committee members will know training was provided for the Governance Committee after the last meeting in June. At that meeting two parish tier representatives were appointed to the committee, one of whom was previously a member of the committee and so has already been appropriately trained. The Monitoring Officer is planning to undertake training for the new parish tier representative(s) prior to the October Governance Committee meeting and will provide a verbal update in this regard at the meeting.
- 1.6. The 2019 report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life Best Practice recommendation 15 suggests that senior officers should meet with Group Leaders. This was implemented prior to the pandemic and has recently been re-instated.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statistical information regarding complaints made

Background papers: Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:
Complaints Procedure

Standards Enquiries and Investigations Statistics – Localism Act 2011

April 2023 – to October 2023

Status of Complaint Categories	Total No.	Case No.	City, Parish tier Councillor	Date Issue First Raised	Alleged Breach or Issue Raised	Current Position
1. No formal complaint or withdrawn	0					
2. No further action required after consultation with one of the Independent Persons	0					
3. Not able to legally pursue complaint	0					
4. Complaint on hold	0					

Status of Complaint Categories	Total No.	Case No.	City, Parish tier Councillor	Date Issue First Raised	Alleged Breach or Issue Raised	Current Position
5. Decision as to appropriate action still awaited	1	7/23	Parish tier	2/10/23	Alleged failure to include certain interests in completed register of interests form	Initial assessment pending
6. Complaints being investigated	0					
Total	0					

Formal Complaint Outcomes

	Case No. and Councillor	Committee Date and Decision	Date Issue First Raised	Current Position
Outcome of Investigations				
Other Action				



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Senior Responsible Officer's report in relation to the Council's RIPA arrangements

Report by:
Senior Responsible Officer

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer,
lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606560

Purpose

To update members on the Council's RIPA arrangements.

Recommendations

1. To note the annual update for members.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. RIPA relates to covert investigatory powers given to local authorities for specific and limited purposes. For local authorities such as Chelmsford City Council only three types of activity may be authorised and this includes directed surveillance, the use of covert human intelligence source and the acquisition of communications data. These powers are overseen by the Investigatory Powers

Commissioners Office (IPCO) who undertakes periodic RIPA inspections. Details of how these types of activity could be authorised by the Council are set out in detail in two policies – the RIPA policy and the RIPA social media policy.

- 1.2. In terms of number of authorisations granted, as has been the case for some years, the Council has not needed to obtain any RIPA approvals during the past year. However, the Council needs to make sure that it remains ready to do so if necessary and that staff are properly trained to ensure investigations continue to be undertaken in a lawful and appropriate way. Ongoing annual reviews of RIPA arrangements are undertaken to support this and provide assurance.
- 1.3. Inspections by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) usually take place every few years. An inspection was undertaken over the summer by way of a written response being provided to the inspectors for consideration. The inspectors were satisfied with the Council's arrangements and the response provided. The next inspection will take place in around 3 years.

2. Annual Review 2023

- 2.1 Both the Council's RIPA and RIPA Social Media Policies were reviewed in some detail during the previous inspection in 2020. Further technical updating is necessary as a result of legislative changes under the CHIS (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021 and the new CHIS Code of Practice. A personnel update is also necessary as a result of the appointment of a new RIPA Co Ordinating Officer earlier this year. The policy updates are being made by the SRO under officer delegation.
- 2.2 Training of key personnel is complete although new staff and refresher training is part of ongoing training reviews. Further refresher training is currently being planned for the Autumn. RIPA policies together with training needs will continue to be reviewed at least annually together with any ongoing actions through the RIPA officer working group. Part of the annual review process also involves providing an assurance report to the Governance Committee, usually in the autumn.

List of appendices:

Nil

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the RIPA policies referred to in the report

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: none

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Current RIPA and RIPA social media policies



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Information Governance Update

Report by:
Data Protection Officer

Officer Contact:

John Breen, Information Governance Manager & DPO, email:
john.breen@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606215

Purpose

To provide an annual update on the Council's approach to the assurance and management of information.

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of this report.
-

Achievements and Further Developments

1. Statutory Requests – information requests comprise of Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests. In 2022/23 the Information Governance Team, together with services, processed 874 requests and 90% were answered within statutory timescales. This compares with 785 requests received in 2021/22 where 90% were also answered within timescale. Additionally, no [zero] cases relating to these information requests were referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in 2022/23.
2. Data Breaches – the number of data breaches increased from 27 in 2021/22 to 35 in 2022/23. These breaches are categorised as following:

- i. 15 email breaches – consists of officers putting email addresses in the 'To' field instead of 'Bcc' field enabling individuals to see other individuals' email addresses, or officers sending emails to the wrong recipient.
- ii. 11 enveloping breaches – where two or more letters for different individuals are put in the same envelope or letters are sent to the wrong address.
- iii. 9 other breaches – other incidents including errors in online forms and external reports.

All data breaches are investigated thoroughly in line with the Council's Data Breach Procedure. These investigations also enable the Council and officers a chance to learn from these breaches. In addition, no cases relating to data breaches were referred to the ICO in 2022/23.

3. In July, the Council ran a phishing campaign which targeted employees for personal information. In the wider world these types of attacks continue to rise and become more sophisticated as time progresses. The simulation run by the Council was an imitation of a real attack to provide employees with more awareness to help them recognise real malicious attacks. As with all phishing simulations the outcome of this campaign has been carefully considered and is used to inform further the Council's response (including training and awareness) to cyber security risks.
4. Training and Awareness – the 'human factor' is often the weakest link in information security and therefore ensuring staff and Councillors are appropriately trained is a very important element of compliance for data protection. In 2018/19, general GDPR eLearning training was delivered to all computer-based staff. A year later a new eLearning course was launched and focussed on cyber awareness. In 2021/22, a new eLearning course on cyber awareness and home working was developed to coincide with the organisational shift towards more individuals working from home. The Council achieved a completion rate of 90%. Last year, the Council focussed again on cyber awareness and phishing, however the completion rate dropped to 83%. Cyber awareness training for this year is due to be released shortly.
5. Cyber Security Review – This year has been another year of intense work on Cyber Security, we have completed our first full year with the vCISO and this has proven to be a successful engagement as we align ourselves to industry best practice. The vCISO has met with a number of senior staff and we have made several updates to our policies and practices. There have also been many technical changes; migrating off existing third-party anti-virus to Microsoft's Defender (which is included in our Office 365 license), replacing old firewalls with new Open Source based firewalls, and working on building our own single pane of glass cyber security alerts dashboard. These changes have allowed us to have much better visibility of our cyber security hygiene within our IT estate. Our technical controls have again been recognised as

being very strong, recently completing our PSN code of connection and for the first time not having any remediation work to do.

6. Policies – the Council have a number of Policies which link to security and the protection of personal information which have been developed and reviewed in recent years. In the last year the Council have developed House Rules for Social Media, and Consultation and Engagement Best Practice for Personal Sensitive Information. A review of our current suite of security and governance policies (including the Information Security Code of Conduct within the constitution) will take place within the next year.
7. Consents – the GDPR introduced more stringent rules around consents, meaning organisations were required to consider how the consents were obtained in order to determine if they were GDPR compliant. The Council has refined its marketing lists to ensure adequate consents under GDPR are in place and have worked on rebuilding its depleted marketing lists. The number of subscribers across GovDelivery [general marketing] and Dotdigital/Spektrix [Theatres marketing] is now over 74,000 as the number of subscribers increased by nearly 14,000 last year.
8. Privacy Notices – organisations are required to have privacy notices to inform users how they are going to use their data before receiving it. The Council now has 29 privacy notices in place across a range of different service areas, which are regularly reviewed and updated.
9. Risk Management – information governance risks have been developed and fit the Council’s revised risk management criteria. They are an important step in the Council’s maturing information governance framework and enable the Council to put more effort and resources into areas which carry a higher risk. An example of this has been the Council investing more resources in cyber security training and initiatives.
10. Contracts - one of the most difficult areas for the Council is ensuring that external suppliers are contractually aware of their legal responsibilities when handling information on our behalf, including whether they are complying with data protection law in delivering services for the Council. All contracts issued, including the standard Terms and Conditions, contain appropriate data protection clauses. Suppliers are required to agree to these terms before we purchase from them. OneCouncil now holds all contract records that result from sourcing processes dealt with by the Procurement Team. Smaller contracts may still be put in place, by services, outside of our processes but the majority of these are covered by our standard Terms and Conditions.
11. Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) – DPIAs are useful in helping organisations identify the most effective way to comply with their data protection obligations and meet individuals’ expectations of privacy. They are a statutory requirement in certain situations under GDPR and are used by the

Council when there is a significant change in the way personal data is processed, such as the purchase of a new IT system. Post GDPR, Management Team approved DPIA guidance for the Council and since then over 50 DPIAs have been completed across a wide range of Council services.

List of Appendices

Nil

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

These are set out in this report



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review

Report by:

Director of Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Jan Decena, Democratic Services Officer, email: jan.decena@chelmsford.gov.uk,
telephone: 01245 606523

Purpose

This report provides information on complaints dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about the City Council in 2022-2023 and the Annual Letter from the Commission dated 19th July 2023.

Recommendations

Subject to any comments members might have, the report be noted.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) investigates complaints about councils and certain other bodies. The LGO's aims are to promote good service delivery and customer care. It investigates complaints about most council matters including and in particular, as far as this Council is concerned, housing and planning functions.

1.2 The service it provides is independent, impartial and free. The LGO looks at the process of decision making, rather than the decision itself and cannot investigate complaints where there are other means of obtaining redress such as via planning appeals or through the courts. The process requires people to use a council's

complaints procedures first before complaining to the LGO if they are dissatisfied with the response.

1.3 The duty of the LGO is to establish whether there has been maladministration or fault and, if so, whether it led to injustice. Maladministration means that a matter was not dealt with properly, for example because procedures were not correctly followed. Injustice means that the maladministration led to the complainant being unfairly treated.

1.4 A significant proportion of complaints to the LGO are not formally investigated as they are referred to local authorities to deal with through their local complaint arrangements if those have not been followed. Similarly, many complaints are not formally determined by the LGO because the complaint is settled during the course of the investigation ('local settlements') by being referred back to the local authority. The LGO encourages such local settlements whenever possible.

1.5 Each year, the LGO writes to each authority to summarise the work of the Commission in relation to that authority and its performance generally in comparison with other authorities. The letter and the information on complaints against the Council is submitted to this Committee for its consideration and comments. The letter for 2022-2023 is at **Appendix 1** to this report.

2. Complaints Received in 2022-23

2.1 Year on year the number of enquiries and complaints fluctuates and, in 2022-23, 14 enquiries and complaints relating to this Council were received by the Commission, lower than the fifteen received in 2021-22 but higher with the six received in 2020-21. The number of complaints received does not necessarily tally with the number of complaints decided as the receipt and investigation of complaints can cover two annual periods.

2.2 In comparison with previous years, the number of complaints received last year reflected a general downward trend over the past few years with the lowest during 2020/21. It was noted that the number of complaints were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020/21. Number of complaints since then were returning to pre-pandemic levels.

<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>
11	18	13	13	6	14	14

2.3 During 2022-23, the Commission made decisions on twelve complaints about the Council.

- One complaint was upheld a summary of this case is provided below.
- Seven complaints were found to be either no evidence or insufficient evidence of fault.

- One complaint was found to be not significant to warrant an investigation.
- Two complaints were found to have other separate reviews or appeal rights.
- One complaint was found to have insufficient information to proceed.

2.4 The data provided by the Ombudsman is based on information held by that office and will not necessarily match that held by the Council. For example, the Ombudsman's numbers include enquiries from people signposted back to the Council after contacting the LGO, some of whom may never subsequently contact the Council.

2.5 A summary of those cases on which decisions were made and about which the Council is aware is set out in **Appendix 2**. One complaint was upheld although the recommendations of the Ombudsman were fully implemented, and no further action is necessary. A summary of this complaint is set out in paragraph 2.6 below.

2.6 The LGO summary for this upheld complaint is as follows: Miss X complained about how the Council dealt with her homelessness application. There was no fault in how the Council offered, and ended its duty to arrange, interim accommodation, gave Miss X advice about its housing allocation scheme or communicated with her. There was fault in how the Council first decided Miss X was not homeless. The resulting delay caused Miss X avoidable distress and uncertainty for which the Council agreed to apologise and pay a financial remedy. The Council also agreed to remind its staff to properly consider affordability in homelessness cases.

2.7 Seen in the context of complaints against other councils, Chelmsford is neither better nor worse than other authorities of a similar size and with similar responsibilities. Comparative information can be seen by following the link entitled Your Council's Performance on page 2 of the Annual Letter.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Ombudsman's Annual Letter reveals no change in the number of complaints against the Council in 2022-23 and that one was upheld. The Ombudsman has expressed no concerns about the way in which the Council handles complaints or about its internal processes in general.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1A - Letter from Local Government Ombudsman dated 19 July 2023

Appendix 1B – Complaint statistics

Appendix 2 - Cases decided in 2022-23 of which the Council is aware.

Background papers:

The appendices to this report

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

None

Financial:

None as there were no complaints in respect of which the Council had to pay compensation or ex gratia payments

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

None

Personnel:

None

Risk Management:

A failure to be aware of or to address complaints could result in unsafe or inadequate services being delivered to the detriment of those receiving them. The Council's reputation could also be damaged

Equality and Diversity:

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Complaints are monitored by equalities representatives in each service to ensure that there is no disproportionate dissatisfaction by the different equality target groups. This data is considered as part of the assessment process to ensure that there is no discrimination in service delivery.

Health and Safety:

None

Digital:

None

Other:

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:
None are relevant

19 July 2023

By email

Mr Eveleigh
Chief Executive
Chelmsford City Council

Dear Mr Eveleigh

Annual Review letter 2022-23

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2023. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As always, I would encourage you to consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

The end of the reporting year, saw the retirement of Michael King, drawing his tenure as Local Government Ombudsman to a close. I was delighted to be appointed to the role of Interim Ombudsman in April and look forward to working with you and colleagues across the local government sector in the coming months. I will be building on the strong foundations already in place and will continue to focus on promoting improvement through our work.

Complaint statistics

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

Over the past two years, we have reviewed our processes to ensure we do the most we can with the resources we have. One outcome is that we are more selective about the complaints we look at in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. While providing a more sustainable way for us to work, it has meant that changes in uphold rates this year are not solely down to the nature of the cases coming to us. We are less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, so we are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

Our average uphold rate for all investigations has increased this year and you may find that your organisation's uphold rate is higher than previous years. This means that comparing uphold rates with previous years carries a note of caution. Therefore, I recommend comparing this statistic with that of similar organisations, rather than previous years, to better understand your organisation's performance.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we were satisfied with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 26 July 2023. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

I know that complaints offer organisations a rich source of intelligence and insight that has the potential to be transformational. These insights can indicate a problem with a specific area of service delivery or, more broadly, provide a perspective on an organisation's culture and ability to learn. To realise the potential complaints have to support service improvements, organisations need to have the fundamentals of complaint handling in place. To support you to do so, we have continued our work with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code that will provide a standard for organisations to work to. We will consult on the code and its implications prior to launch and will be in touch with further details.

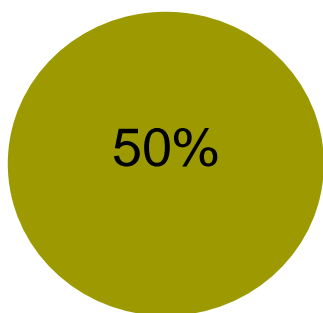
In addition, our successful training programme includes practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We can also offer tailored support and bespoke training to target specific issues your organisation might have identified. We delivered 105 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1350 people. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training or get in touch at training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Najsarek
Interim Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Interim Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaints upheld



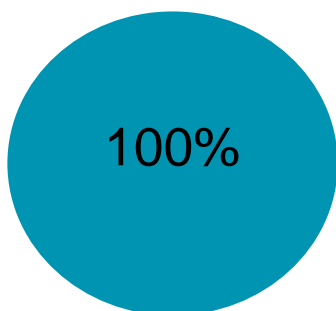
50% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **59%** in similar organisations.

1
upheld decision

Statistics are based on a total of **2** investigations for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



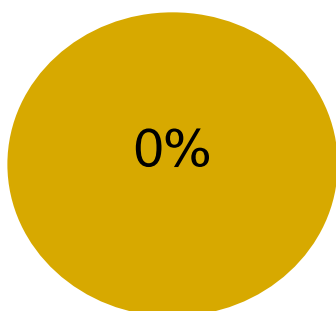
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **100%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **1** compliance outcome for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **0%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **15%** in similar organisations.

0
satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **1** upheld decision for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Authority	Category	Received
Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	12/04/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Housing	14/06/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Housing	04/05/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	01/08/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	11/07/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	13/07/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	17/08/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	17/08/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Housing	01/09/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	04/10/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Housing	04/10/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	24/10/2022
Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	01/12/2022

Reference	Authority	Category	Decided	Decision	Decision Reason	Remedy	Service Improvement recommendations
21012676	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/06/2022	Not Upheld	no fault		
21018296	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	22/04/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault		
22000514	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	28/04/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice		
22001314	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	27/06/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault		
22001492	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	10/08/2022	Upheld	fault & inj	Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Provide training and/or guidance	The Council agreed to remind its housing advice staff that they should consider whether it is reasonable for people who apply as homeless to continue to occupy property they are entitled to, including whether the property is affordable for them.
22003862	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	15/08/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault		
22004547	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	25/07/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	26(6)(b) appeal to Minister		
22005051	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	11/08/2022	Advice given	Previously considered and decided		
22006450	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	06/09/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault		
22006635	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	18/08/2022	Advice given	Previously considered and decided		
22007325	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	03/10/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	26(6)(c) Court remedy		
22007423	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	28/10/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice		
22010096	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	22/11/2022	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault		
22011785	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	18/01/2023	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised		

Reference	Authority	Category	Decided	Remedy	Remedy Target Date	Remedy Achieved Date	Satisfaction with Compliance
22001492	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	09-Aug-22	Apology Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble Provide training and/or guidance	10-Nov-22	06-Sep-22	Remedy complete and satisfied

Complaints decided by the Ombudsman in 2022-23 of which the Council is aware

Complaint reference

21018296

Category

Planning & Development

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint about the Council's decision to grant planning approval for fencing for a development near his home. This is because there is no evidence of fault in how the Council considered and approved plans.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

21012676

Category

Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman found no fault with the actions or decisions of the Council. Despite no fault, the Ombudsman recommended the Council installed noise monitoring equipment into Mr X's property given the ongoing nature of his complaint. The Council accepted this recommendation.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22000514

Category

Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman could not investigate this complaint about the Council allegedly causing damage to the complainant's property. Any injustice is not significant enough to warrant an investigation.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22001314

Category

Housing

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman could not investigate this complaint that work carried out under a Disabled Facilities Grant was not completed. That is because there is insufficient evidence of fault to justify involvement.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22001492

Category

Housing

Summary of decision

Miss X complained about how the Council dealt with her homelessness application. There was no fault in how the Council offered, and ended its duty to arrange, interim accommodation, gave Miss X advice about its housing allocation scheme or communicated with her. There was fault in how the Council first decided Miss X was not homeless. The resulting delay caused Miss X avoidable distress and uncertainty for which the Council agreed to apologise and pay a financial remedy. The Council also agreed to remind its staff to properly consider affordability in homelessness cases.

Remedy

Council apologised and paid complainant a financial remedy. The Council also agreed to remind its staff to properly consider affordability in homelessness cases.

Complaint reference

22004547

Category

Corporate and Other Services

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman would not investigate this complaint about the Council's decision to tell Ms X to remove fencing at her property. This is because she has a right of appeal to the Planning Inspector and there is no reason why she cannot use this if she is unhappy with the Council's decision.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22003862

Category

Planning and Development

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate Mrs X's complaint about the Council's planning process leading to its decision to grant permission for a new house near her property. It was found that there is not enough evidence of fault by the Council in its decision-making process which would have affected the planning outcome to warrant an investigation. The Ombudsman also decided to not investigate Mrs X's complaint about the Council's responses to her concerns and complaints because Ombudsman is not investigating the core issue which gave rise to the complaint.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22006450

Category

Benefits & Tax

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint about the Council not paying Mr X the council tax rebate for energy costs. There is not enough evidence of fault by the Council.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22007325

Category

Housing

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint because of a separate review and appeal rights she can use to dispute the Council's decision, and they would not be able provide the result she wants from her complaint.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22007423

Category

Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint as the Council has not yet issued a licence so there is not enough evidence of it being at fault, and the complainant has not yet suffered injustice which could form the basis of a complaint as required by law. The Ombudsman no powers to intervene in ongoing matters or speculate about what might or might not happen in future.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22009160

Category

Housing

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman found no fault in how the Council decided Miss X's priority on the housing register. The Council properly considered her circumstances when she first applied to the housing register and requested a health and housing award. It also reviewed her banding when she asked it to, all while following its allocations policy.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22010096

Category

Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman decided not to not investigate this complaint about problems with the recycling collections. This is because there is insufficient evidence of fault and injustice.

Remedy

N/A

Complaint reference

22011785

Category

Benefits & Tax

Summary of decision

The Ombudsman closed the complaint because Mr X has not provided information requested. There is no decision statement and this decision will not count in the annual statistics about the council. The complaint would reopen the complaint if Mr X provide the information. The Ombudsman would then assess it in the usual way.

Remedy

N/A

Note: No details were provided on Complaints Reference 22005051 and 22006635. It is assumed either that the complainants went directly to the Ombudsman and were advised to contact the Council to enable the complaints to be dealt with through its internal complaints procedure, were matters on which the Ombudsman has no jurisdiction or were matters not worthy of investigation.



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Annual Whistleblowing Report

Report by:

Director of Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne Legal and Democratic Services Manager, Tel: 01245 606560,
email: lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To provide an annual update to members of the Governance Committee on the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report as regards complaints received.
-

1. Background

1.1. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure was first introduced in October 1997. Since that time the policy has been updated and reviewed periodically to ensure it is compliant with any changes in legislation or guidance, most notably a light touch review was undertaken earlier this year.

1.2. The policy establishes a system whereby employees of the Council, including agency workers, consultants, users of its services, members of the public and

Councillors, are able to report suspected wrongdoing. By doing so the Council publicly declares that it does not tolerate malpractice or fraudulent activities in the operation of its services.

- 1.3. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy highlights the legal protection for workers who "blow the whistle" (i.e. the 'Whistleblower') and ensure that they do not suffer any recriminations, victimisation or harassment as a result of raising a concern with the Council. An employee who makes a protected disclosure benefits from legal protection if they have a reasonable belief that the issue being raised is in the public interest.
- 1.4. Employees are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 as amended, which means that the Council cannot discriminate against them because they made such a complaint. That protection is not subject to any qualifying period of employment and is referred to as a 'day one' right in employment law. The principles of protection are also applied to non-employees under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
- 1.5. The Council's appointed Whistleblowing Officer is the Director of Connected Chelmsford. However, the day-to-day management and handling of issues raised is dealt with by the Legal & Democratic Services Manager or, in their absence, the Human Resources Services Manager. Both have delegated authority to receive and investigate complaints under the procedure whilst safeguarding the confidentiality of the complainant as far as is possible. Normally this means the identity of the whistleblower will only be known by the officer managing the complaint and any investigator. All complaints raised are fully considered and dealt with swiftly.
- 1.6. In many cases the issue raised is not strictly a whistleblowing matter but a complaint about a service received from the Council. In those cases the matter is passed to the relevant department to resolve direct with the complainant. This is noted on the papers and is then dealt with outside the Whistleblowing procedure.
- 1.7. As is best practice an annual report is made to the Governance Committee regarding the issues addressed. The last such report was made in 2022 and this report provides the update since that time. The Council's existing Retention and Destruction Policy in relation to Whistleblowing complaints is to retain records for 6 years after matters are completed and accordingly the report has been updated to include data from the last 6 years.

2. Position Update and Analysis

2.1. The table below provides a history of the number of whistleblowing reported cases received over the previous years:

Year	Number of complaints received
2016 - 2017	13
2017 - 2018 (to Oct 2017 only)	8
2018-2019 (to Oct 2018 only)	13
2019 (October 2018 – December 2019)	5
2020 (January - October 2020)	5
2021 (November 2020 to November 2021)	12
2022 (December 2021 to September 2022)	5
2023 (October 2022 to September 2023)	7

2.2. A summary of the complaints received over the past year since October 2022 are set out below. Members are reminded that further information cannot be provided due to the confidentiality protection to which whistle blowers are entitled. 2 alleged issues that were outside of Chelmsford City Council's geographical area. 5 reports alleged wrongdoing by staff or in relation to services. These have been investigated and/or action taken as appropriate. 3 of the reports also involved a service complaint element which was also considered and dealt with appropriately.

How they were processed

No public interest dimension so could not be dealt with as a WB complaint, or was instead assessed and investigated as a service complaint	0
Assessed and investigated as a whistleblowing complaint.	5
Not capable of resolution by the City Council (i.e. outside our jurisdiction)	2

2.3. It is apparent that both staff and members of the public have confidence in the Council and are willing to raise concerns. The electronic facilities for logging complaints through the dedicated whistleblowing mailbox and through website forms remain the preferred method of communication. The publicity arrangements for whistleblowing also appear to be embedded and working well.

2.4. Every effort is made to maintain confidentiality where requested. When this is not possible complainants are advised and provided with the reasons. Complainants' details are not disclosed until they are made aware of how they will be used. This allows officers to follow up on concerns raised and to provide progress updates and feedback when a case is concluded. This approach instils trust and confidence in the arrangements in place and fosters a relationship of openness and accountability.

2.5. The policy is part of staff induction training and is easily accessible on the Council's website. It should be noted that the Audit and Risk Committee are currently reviewing the Fraud and Corruption Policy and Anti Bribery Policy. The Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed further once this has been completed to ensure they are aligned and compliment the overall arrangements.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Members of the Governance Committee are asked to note the details as to the complaints received for the latest annual review and that further changes as a result of the work being undertaken by Audit and Risk Committee will be reported in 2024.

List of appendices: None

Background papers: None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: The legislative requirements are addressed in the report

Financial: None, although the process enables reporting of potential fraudulent activities and malpractices that may affect the financial position of the Council

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: The process underpins the promotion of a culture of openness and transparency and creates an environment where whistleblowing is encouraged and supported.

Risk Management: The process assists to minimise the risk of malpractice and fraud within the Council

Equality and Diversity: The policy and procedure has not changed so no impact assessment is required

Health and Safety: Establishment of whistleblowing procedures ensures that both Council employees and users of its services are able to confidentially report matters of concern (including those with H&S implications) and for these to be proactively addressed.

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the Council:

- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
 - Fraud and Corruption Strategy
 - Anti-bribery Policy
-



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Report by:

Legal and Democratic Services Manager

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer, email: lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606560

Purpose

To consider the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group in relation to proposed changes to the City Council's Constitution.

Recommendations

That, subject to any views the Cabinet might have, the Council be recommended to approve:

1. the amendments to the Constitution detailed in Appendix 1 to this report;
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council's Constitution is reviewed at least annually to ensure that it remains complete, up to date and reflects current practice and legislation. Some parts of the Constitution, such as the rules relating to meetings and officer delegations, are likely to need detailed review as they are more likely to be affected by changes to organisational practices and legislation. Other parts only need periodic detailed examination as they tend not to change significantly over time.

- 1.2. The annual governance statement and action plan approved at the Joint meeting of Audit and Risk Committee and Governance Committee in June 2023 included an action to complete an ongoing phased review of the constitution which is now reviewing any constitutional documents that have not been reviewed within the last few years. Consequently more changes are being brought forward during this review period and further changes are likely to arise until this review has been completed.
- 1.3. Annual reviews and other ad hoc reviews are initiated by officers and their recommendations are submitted in the first instance to the Constitution Working Group. Its recommendations are then passed to the Governance Committee, the Cabinet (where appropriate) and finally Full Council.
- 1.4. The Governance Committee is asked to consider the following changes to the Constitution (full details of which are set out in Appendix 1):
 - A clarification in relation to methods of voting at meetings
 - Broadening the existing officer delegation to the Legal and Democratic Services Manager in relation to minor amendments to the constitution, subject to consultation with the Chair of Governance Committee.

2. Voting

- 2.1 A City Councillor raised whether a vote by assent (e.g. the chair of the meeting asking members “is that agreed?” rather than asking for a show of hands) should be permitted.
- 2.2 The default position for voting under the Constitution is a show of hands unless a recorded vote is requested. However, custom and practice has been to permit a vote by assent in relation to non-controversial items across all meetings. The justification for a vote by assent is that all members present at the meeting and entitled to vote agree – or at least are taken to have agreed – to the item whether they say that the matter is agreed or not. By their silence, they indicate agreement just as much as by a show of hands.
- 2.3 It is worth noting that any member present at the meeting and entitled to vote may, under 4.1.15.6 of Council procedure rules, have their individual vote (or abstention) recorded in the minutes. Similarly, custom and practice has been to permit a voting councillor present at any other meetings to similarly note any dissent in relation to items of business, as necessary. This option would remain even when a vote has been taken by assent.
- 2.4 The Constitutional Working Group discussed this issue. There was support for clarifying the Constitution to permit expressly the practice of voting by assent; it was suggested that the Chair of the meeting should pause where a

vote by assent is used so that individual members who wish to make their dissent clear have an opportunity to do so. Where there is dissent, the Chair of the meeting may revert to a show of hands. For completeness, both the Council rules and the Cabinet/Committee rules make provision for a recorded vote to be taken in some circumstances.

- 2.5 The rule change is sought to clarify that a vote by assent is permitted.

3. Delegation

- 3.1 A significant change to the Constitution – such as the amendments discussed in this report – can only be made by Council. That limits the opportunities to make changes, which is appropriate for any significant change but would risk creating practical difficulties if no urgent changes could be made.
- 3.2 That's why minor changes can be made under Article 2.16.3. This permits the Legal and Democratic Services Manager, to make minor changes without requiring Council agreement. Examples are:
- Any change in legislation governing Council operations (without significantly affecting those operations)
 - The change from four directors to three in 2021, meaning there was no longer a Director of Financial Services
 - Changes in Cabinet roles and responsibilities decided by the Leader
- 3.3 There are other circumstances where minor changes to the Constitution need to be made, for example to correct errors (such as statutory references) or to update cross-references to changes that have been made elsewhere in the Constitution but were missed at the time.
- 3.4 Typographical errors and corrections are permitted under the delegation in any event. It has been proposed that the delegation to make minor changes should be broader so that it expressly permits any minor change and is not limited to the categories that are currently mentioned, putting this beyond argument.
- 3.5 The Constitutional Working Group discussed this proposed change. The working group was happy to recommend that the delegation be broadened so that "minor changes" that arose outside of the 3 specific examples already contained within the rules would be permitted by delegation, subject to consultation with the Chair of Governance Committee. The working group was also provided with a draft copy of a new proposed practice note that would help clarify the process to make changes to the constitution.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. Both proposed amendments to the constitution were supported by the cross-party working group. The proposals will be referred to the Cabinet for its comments before being passed to Full Council in December 2023.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed amendments

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: Constitution Working Group

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None

Governance Committee 18th October 2023 – proposed changes to the constitution

Item proposed for change	Current version	Proposed version (with additions highlighted)
<p>1. Voting - clarification that voting “by assent” eg asking the meeting whether the item is agreed ? is permitted at the discretion of the person chairing the meeting. The Rules of Debate practice note will also be updated.</p>	<p>Council procedure rules 4.1.15.3 Voting by show of hands Voting will be by show of hands unless a recorded vote is requested under rule 4.1.15.4.</p> <p>Cabinet and Committee procedure rules 4.2.18.3 Voting by show of hands Unless a recorded vote is requested under rule 4.2.18.4, voting will be by show of hands.</p>	<p>Council procedure rules 4.1.15.3 Voting by show of hands Voting will be by show of hand unless a recorded vote is requested under rule 4.1.15.4 or the Mayor proposes a vote by assent.</p> <p>Cabinet and Committee procedure rules 4.2.18.3 Voting by show of hands Unless a recorded vote is requested under rule 4.2.18.4 or the person chairing the meeting proposes a vote by assent, voting will be by show of hands.</p>

<p>2. Changing the constitution – tweak to delegation in relation to making minor changes to the constitution and not limited to the specific situations set out in the existing rules. A new practice note is also proposed to help clarify the process to be followed in relation to the various types of changes to the constitution that could be made. This will be finalised after members have considered their position in relation to this proposed change.</p>	<p>Article 2.16.3 The Legal and Democratic Services Manager shall have authority to make minor changes to the constitution arising from new legislation or changes to the organisational structure of the Council arising from decisions of the Council or Cabinet or in exercise of the Leader’s authority to make changes to Cabinet responsibilities.</p>	<p>Article 2.16.3 The Legal and Democratic Services Manager shall have authority to make minor changes to the constitution including but not limited to those arising from new legislation or changes to the organisational structure of the Council arising from decisions of the Council or Cabinet or in exercise of the Leader’s authority to make changes to Cabinet responsibilities. Any minor changes which fall outside of the above examples will be subject to consultation with the Chair of Governance Committee</p>
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Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18th October 2023

Update on Register of Interests in City and Parish tier Councils

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer,
lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606560

Purpose

To update members on the register of interest forms in City and Parish tier authorities.

Recommendations

1. To note update.
-

1. Background

1.1. It is apparent from historic complaints as well as existing monitoring arrangements (which include periodic checks and reminders via clerks) that there remain a few ongoing issues about the completion and updating of the register of interest forms in some authorities at parish tier. To help improve oversight and increase compliance an annual assurance report was introduced in 2022. This was with a view to laying the foundations for further development and improvements after City and Parish elections which took place in May 2023.

1.2. One of the improvements which was implemented after the May 2023 elections for city councillors was the introduction of an online form to update the register

of interests. This has been well received and all city councillors completed the register of interest process by June 2023. This has enabled some initial consistency checks to be raised with Group Leaders and further work is being undertaken to improve the quality of the responses in the future, once the parish tier register of interest work is complete.

1.3. It should also be noted that whilst several parish tier authorities in Chelmsford have adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct (currently 13 parish tier councils are currently known to have done so and 1 has decided not to adopt the model) this has not yet been formally considered by all parish tier councils in the Chelmsford area. Further work is being undertaken with parish tier councils in relation to this to encourage adoption and the city council has made available new register of interest forms as well as an accessible version of the code of conduct to ease this decision. The potential to extend the online form process to parish tier councils in the future is being explored but this is dependent upon the adoption of the model code. This will include exploring twin hatted councillors at city and parish tier to only complete one online form for both registers of interests. The two new parish tier councils created following the community governance review have been added to the report this year and both have adopted the model code.

1.4. Set out below is the position as at the time of writing the report in relation to the completion of register of interest forms. These have been RAG (red/amber/green) rated.

2. Table detailing returned forms

Council	Amount of Cllrs (excl Vacancies)	Amount of submitted ROI Forms
Chelmsford City	57	57
Boreham	12	10 (2 vacancies) (complete)
Broomfield	13	10 (3 vacancies) (complete)
Chelmer Village	15	8 (7 vacancies, complete)
Chelmsford Garden Community Council	13	13 (complete)
Chignal	7	5 (1 vacancy, 1 outstanding)
Danbury	12	11 (1 vacancy)
East Hanningfield	7	5 (2 outstanding forms)
Galleywood	9	9 (complete)
Good Easter	7	7 (complete)

Great & Little Leighs	10	7 (3 vacancies) (complete)
Great Baddow	15	15 (complete)
Great Waltham	11	11 (complete)
Highwood	7	7 (complete)
Little Baddow	9	8 (1 vacancy) (complete)
Little Waltham	7	7 (complete)
Margaretting	7	6 (1 vacancy) (complete)
Pleshey	7	7 (complete)
Rettendon	9	8 (1 outstanding)
Roxwell	7	7 (complete)
Runwell	13	13 (complete)
Sandon	8	6 (2 vacancies) (complete)
South Hanningfield	12	12 (complete)
South Woodham Ferrers	20	20 (complete)
Springfield	13	12 (1 vacancy) (complete)
Stock	9	2 (3 forms outstanding and 4 vacancies)
West Hanningfield	8	6 (1 vacancy, 1 recently co-opted councillor)
Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre	9	5 (1 outstanding and 3 vacancies)
Writtle	15	13 (1 outstanding and 1 vacancy)

List of appendices:

Nil

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

18 October 2023

Work Programme

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:
Monitoring Officer – Lorraine Browne, 01245 606560,
lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to receive members' comments on the Committee's future work programme.

Recommendations

1. Members are invited to comment on the Committee's work programme, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and make any necessary amendments to it.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The Work Programme is reviewed by the Committee at each meeting. The current version is attached at Appendix 1 to this report and includes the proposed work for future meetings, based on the Programme content for recent years.

2. Conclusion

2.1. Members are invited to comment on the Committee's work programme and make any necessary amendments to it.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Governance Committee Work Programme

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Not applicable

Governance Committee Work Programme

Appendix 1

October 2023

- Monitoring Officer Report (including routine update on complaints and Member Code of Conduct training)
- Annual Report on Whistleblowing
- Annual Report from Senior Information Risk Owner
- Ombudsman Complaints
- RIPA Annual Review
- Annual report on Register of Interests

January 2024

- Monitoring Officer Report
- Alignment of Whistleblowing policy to work being undertaken on Fraud and Corruption
- Proposed minor change to Employee Code of Conduct
- Polling District Review

March 2024

- Monitoring Officer Report
- Annual Constitution Report
- Gifts and Hospitality Report

Ad hoc reports

- Politically exempt officer posts

Training