

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting12th September 2019

1. Title of Item/Report

Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided a background to existing arrangements for managing complaints / customer feedback, the detail of the review of the current policy, suggested changes and next steps with respect to the implementation of the revised policy.

The Council's existing Corporate Compliments, Commendations, Comments and Complaints policy and procedure was due for a periodic review. Although many aspects of the policy were effective in managing the expectations of customers, maintaining satisfactory response rates and supporting an approach to early resolution and learning, some aspects were no longer as effective in meeting changing customer needs, responding to national trends and simplifying the process in response to customer feedback. Recent outcomes / recommendations and good practice guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, also supported the need to review the existing policy.

The management / coordination of complaints, comments and commendations was managed and recorded centrally, with a few exceptions. A dedicated complaints telephone line, an email account and online web forms were the main means by which customers could make a complaint and or provide feedback. Social Media sites were also a valuable source of customer feedback although official complaints received via social media were redirected to the website or a complaints telephone line.

Complaints were logged and recorded on one system and all related correspondence retained. This provided a strategic oversight of customer feedback and reports from the system enable intelligence to be used to effectively manage and monitor timeliness of responses, escalation rates through the various stages of the complaint process, upheld rates and learning.

It was proposed that the revised policy be rolled out from 1st October

2019. The council web pages would be updated with the new policy, additional guidance and support information. Council staff would receive training, awareness raising and guidance. Monitoring of the changes would take place to ensure these were working effectively. Reports on progress would be received by the Corporate Governance Group and Senior Management. The Policy would be reviewed periodically.

RESOLVED that the Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy be approved with effect from 1 October 2019.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The existing policy has been in place for several years. Changes to customer needs and expectations, feedback from residents and staff within the council, consideration of national trends and good practice guidance and recommendations from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman have all contributed to the need to review current policy and procedures. Regular monitoring of data and trends alongside some pilot work undertaken on an early resolution process have also contributed to the review of this policy and the recommendations included within this report.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 23 September 2019.

Proper Officer
17 September 2019