

Appendix 1: Update to Member on the Complaints, SARs and FOI Improvement Plan

Meeting / Date:	Cabinet 9 th May 2024
Report Title:	An update to members on the complaints, SARs, FOIs Improvement Plan
Directorate:	Deputy Chief Executive
Action Required	For information
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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report is an appendix to the Complaints and Ombudsman Cases paper to be tabled at Cabinet 9th May 2024. It is designed to provide members with an update on the Complaints, Subject Access Requests (SARs) and Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) Improvement Plan discussed at Leader’s Board on 6th Feb 24.

2. QUESTIONS / ASKS OF BOARD

- 2.1. To note the progress of the Complaints, SARs and FOI improvement plan.

3. UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 3.1. The improvement plan outlined at Leader’s Board on 6th Feb will be delivered under 4 different workstreams shown in the table below.

Workstream Reference	Workstream Title	Workstream Description
1	Process Redesign	Complete overhaul of the end-to-end processes for handling Complaints, SARs, and FOIs
2	Quick Wins Implementation	Implementing quick wins to the existing processes to improve the resident experience.
3	Standards Review and Staff Training	Assessment of current complaints handling standards and identification of necessary training and deployment of training
4	Procurement and Implementation of New Complaints, SARs and FOI system.	Replace the existing Complaints, SARs, and FOIs system with a new solution to modernise and significantly improve the Complaints, SAR and FOI processes.

3.2. Workstream 1 - Process Redesign (Completed)

3.2.1. During February 2024, several process redesign workshops were held with a wide group of internal stakeholders to:

- Define the current end to end business processes for Complaints, Member Enquiries, SARs and FOIs.
- Establish all the pain points in our processes for the residents, and for our staff that handle complaints.
- Define our desired future end to end business processes for Complaints, Member Enquires, SAR and FOIs to improve the resident experience and resolve the pain points of the current processes.

3.2.2. The outputs of these workshops have been used to define the detailed requirements for the Council's new Complaints, SARs and FOI solution.

3.3. Workstream 2 – Quick Wins Implementation (On Track)

3.3.1. Several quick wins were identified from the redesign workshops that will help the Council quickly improve our resident experience, resident communications, process controls and process efficiency.

3.3.2. All the quick wins have been evaluated and the programme is on track to put these in place by end of July 24. These improvements include:

- Changing the web pages on the Council's website that relate to complaints, FOIs and SARs so they are much clearer, simpler and easy to understand.
- Making small improvements to the electronic form that customers use to report complaints to encourage them to provide key information such as a phone number or email address so we can contact them about the resolution of their complaint.
- Updating the automatic email sent to residents after they have submitted a complaint, or compliment, so that it is clearer and manages expectations better.
- Improving the processes where we need more information from the resident in order to investigate and resolve a complaint. Complaints are left open indefinitely in the current process until a customer provides the information required.

In the future, we will ask residents to provide additional information within 10 working days. If we do not receive a response within this timeframe, we will close the complaint and send a follow up correspondence to the resident to confirm their complaint has been closed.

3.4. Workstream 3 – Standards Review and Staff Training (On Track)

- 3.4.1. Over the next month the programme team will be working to review our current Complaints Standards making them much more focused on the residents and improving the way we handle our communications with them. The programme will also refine and clarify the definitions of complaints and service requests and ensure these are understood by all staff handling them.
- 3.4.2. By the end of May 24, we hope to commence the roll out the new standards across the council through a series of communications, briefings and staff workshops.
- 3.4.3. Furthermore a detailed training needs assessment will be undertaken during the summer for all staff handling complaints to improve the way we handle complaints and the skills of the staff responding to them. Training courses will be delivered by the end of September 24.

3.5. Workstream 4 – Procurement and Implementation of New Complaints, SARs and FOI system (On Track).

- 3.5.1. As mentioned in paragraph 3.2.2 the outputs of the process design workshops have been used to define the detailed requirements for the Council's new Complaints, SARs and FOI solution.
- 3.5.2. The project team has now used these requirements to assess and evaluate the different products in the marketplace. As a result we have now identified the iCasework product as the best solution on the market to meet the council's needs.
- 3.5.3. The project has rapidly worked with the procurement team to complete the contract award process and are on track to complete this by the end of April 24.

4. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS AND SARS BACKLOG

Additional resources have been recruited to assist with the clearance of the Complaints and SARs backlogs. Work is now starting to clear the backlog of Stage 1 and 2 complaints.

At Leader's Board we stated that the complaints backlog would be cleared by the end of May 24 and the SARs backlog by the end August 24.

The project believes this is still achievable and on track.