

STAFF COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2019 - 2.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor C Boden, Councillor Mrs J French and Councillor S Tierney

APOLOGIES: Councillor A Bristow (Vice-Chairman), Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor Mrs M Davis and Councillor F Yeulett

Officers in attendance: Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Dan Horn (Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services), Izzi Hurst (Member Services & Governance Officer), Aarron Locks (Shared Service CCTV Manager), Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer) and David Wright (Policy & Communications Manager)

S10/19 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The public minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2019 were confirmed and signed.

S11/19 3CS POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF UNREASONABLE COMPLAINT BEHAVIOUR.

Members considered the 3Cs Policy and Procedure on the Management of Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour report, presented by Peter Catchpole and David Wright.

David Wright explained that the Council currently have nothing in place to deal with persistent and unreasonable complainants. He confirmed that the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) recommend that councils have a procedure in place to identify and manage these individuals.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

1. Councillor Mason asked if the new procedure has been introduced as a result of an increase in these types of complaints. David Wright confirmed that these complainants tend to submit several complaints in a short space of time and then similar complaints several months later repeatedly. He explained that whilst it is not a large number of individuals, it does take up a lot of officer's time.
2. Councillor Boden said whilst he regretted that such a procedure has to be implemented, he understands the reasoning behind the decision. He highlighted that the Council need to ensure that the public have the confidence that any complaints submitted will be dealt with fairly and properly and this procedure only applies to a small number of people.
3. Councillor Boden asked if there is an appeals process in place for those individuals who the Council deem as unreasonable complainants. David Wright confirmed that to enforce this policy would be a last resort once all other options are exhausted. Appeals would be considered by the Corporate Director who has had no involvement in the complaint process and is therefore impartial.
4. David Wright explained that often these persistent complainants have had their complaints considered by the LGO and even the High Court. Therefore they have exhausted all avenues available to them and continual engagement can often exacerbate the situation. The Council currently have no procedure in place to deal with this issue.
5. Councillor Boden proposed an amendment of the wording in 2. Types of unacceptable

behaviour (page 13 of the agenda pack) to read; 'unreasonably changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds'.

6. Councillor Tierney supported the report and said the policy is robust and fair as many other Local Authorities have a tougher stance on this matter. He said members must appreciate how unreasonable these complainants are and the damage it can cause to officers and resources. He stated that the policy is absolutely necessary as a last resort and will allow a permanent decision to be enforced.
7. Councillor Mason agreed and highlighted that the Council are not discouraging genuine complaints. He asked for assurance that this procedure will not be enforced in the early stages of a complaint. Peter Catchpole ensured members that the policy will only be implemented once all other avenues have been exhausted.

Staff Committee APPROVED the updated 3Cs Policy and Procedure on the Management of Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour.

S12/19 CCTV SHARED SERVICE - PHASE 2 - SHARED CCTV OPERATOR SERVICE - CONFIDENTIAL ITEM.

Members considered the CCTV Shared Service – Phase 2 – Shared CCTV Operator Service – Confidential Item report, presented by Carol Pilson, Dan Horn & Aarron Locks.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses.

Staff Committee APPROVED the proposals as outlined in the confidential report.

S13/19 RESTRICTED MINUTES - CONFIDENTIAL ITEM.

The restricted minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2019 were confirmed and signed.

2.50 pm

Chairman