

# Audit and Governance Committee

Date of Meeting	20 September 2016
Officer	Chief Executive
<b>Subject of Report</b>	<b>Corporate Complaints Annual Report 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016</b>
Executive Summary	<p>The County Council, together with many other public service organisations, continue to face significant financial challenges in delivering services. The requirement to actively transform the way services are delivered to our citizens and communities is key to us meeting these challenges. An important aspect of understanding how well the council is performing in its operational delivery of services is through the transparent recording and investigation of complaints.</p> <p>We are currently developing and writing a new complaints policy and strategy to support the council in its commitment to being a Learning Organisation and, through an open, objective and proactive review of complaints we are able to make necessary changes and seek to improve the outcomes for those citizens and communities we serve. Last year's review of our approach to the management of complaints has sought to further actively strengthen the achievement of these important outcomes. The council's centralised complaints team has been in place since December 2015.</p> <p>To help to provide some context around the councils complaints activity for the 2015/16 financial year, the headlines contained in the attached Annual Report are as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We received a total of 313 complaints in 2015-16 compared to 356 received in 2014-15 which is an overall decrease of 12%.</li> <li>○ Comparing 2015-16 and 2014-15 data, in Adult and Community Services, and Environment and the Economy Directorate and Chief Executives, the number of complaints a decrease of 15%, 32% and 30% respectively. One of the reasons why there may have been a decrease in Adult Social Care complaints is that services transferred to Tricuro in this financial year and figures</li> </ul>

	<p>provided would confirm that assumption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ However, we experienced a significant increase in the number of complaints relating to children’s social care, which rose from 52 in 2014-15 to 72 in 2014-15, an increase of 38%. Out of the 72 complaints about children’s social care, 8 complaints were fully justified, 2 complaints were mostly justified and 25 complaints were partly justified, 35 were not justified and 2 required no further action.</li> <li>○ There was also a significant increase in the number of stage 2 investigations in Children’s Services which has had budget implications. This incurred external investigation costs of £23,883.21 in 2015-16.</li> <li>○ The traded complaints service, delivered for schools and academies, generated a total of £22,945.28 income during 2015-16.</li> <li>○ The Local Government Ombudsman made a final decision on 48 complaints in respect of the council. This included 3 decisions of maladministration, 1 of which related to Children’s Services and 2 to Adult social care. In every case the Council acted upon the recommendations made by the LGO to put matters right and each complainant received a letter of apology.</li> </ul> <p>Further analysis and detail is included in the attached Annual Report, which records improvements having been made to address a number of identified weaknesses. It remains vital that the County Council continues to actively take steps to improve the delivery of services to our customers.</p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment: N/A</p> <hr/> <p>Directorate and Service Compliments and Complaints Annual Reports 2015-16; Complaints Review Report, July 2015; Local Government Ombudsman Annual Complaints Report 2015-16</p> <hr/> <p>Budget: There are budget implications in relation to time and resources used in managing and responding to complaints across the authority.</p> <p>There are additional costs created by formal stage 2 investigations from employing independent investigators and independent people. Under the Children’s social care complaints procedure if a complaint is escalated to a Stage 3 Panel there are also additional costs associated with the of employment of independent people to chair and be members of such panels.</p> <hr/> <p>Risk Assessment: Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council’s approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:  Current: LOW  Residual: LOW</p>

## Corporate Complaints Annual Report

	Other Implications: None
Recommendation	That the Committee; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutinises the content of the annual report ;</li> <li>2. Approves the publication of the annual report 2015-16</li> </ol>
Reason for Recommendation	To provide information and assurance on the council's proactive approach to the management of complaints and to seek approval for the Annual Report for 2015-16 to be published.
Appendices	Appendix 1: Dorset County Council's Complaints Procedures Appendix 2: Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review letter
Background Papers	Directorate and Service compliments and complaints reports 2010-2016 Corporate Compliments and Compliments Annual Reports 2010-2016
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