
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	15 November 2022
Report By:	Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance	Report No:	LS/68/22
Contact Officer:	Carol Craig-McDonald	Contact No:	01475 712725
Subject:	Complaint Handling Annual Report 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 This is an agreed routine annual monitoring report to provide the Policy & Resources Committee with details of the annual performance of all complaints received and handled by Inverclyde Council, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), and both Arms-Length Organisations (ALEOs), Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde, for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 1.3 The appended report (appendix 1) provides the annual complaint handling statistical information for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The report has been prepared by the Council's Information Governance Team and provides the following information:
- i. Performance Information;
 - ii. Analysis of complaint activity; and an
 - iii. Update on learning from complaints.
- 1.4 The SPSO has provided statistical information on the Council's complaint handling during the above period, which is included in section 4.10 of this report. There have been no cases involving the Council or the HSCP investigated this year.
- 1.5 The Council remains committed to investigating, learning from and taking appropriate action where it is found that standards have fallen below the level expected or where it is recognised that services could be improved.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) notes the annual performance of Inverclyde Council's complaint handling procedure; and
- (2) approves the publication of the Annual Complaint Handling Report on the Council's website.

Alan Puckrin
Interim Director, Finance & Corporate Governance

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Local Authority Complaint Handler Network (LACHN) is a national forum for local authority complaint handlers to meet quarterly to assist in the development of professional practice in relation to complaint handling. The Council's Complaints Officer alongside representatives represents Inverclyde Council at this forum from 32 Scottish Local Authorities. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) attends these meetings to support the ongoing development of complaint handling within local authorities and to achieve consistency in approach.
- 3.2 There is a requirement for Councils to report complaint handling performance for ALEOs. Inverclyde Council have two ALEOs, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde, and they both require to adhere to reporting on complaints handled although they were not included at the time of the implementation of the model complaint procedure. Inverclyde Council is adhering to the reporting requirements for ALEOs set out by the SPSO.
- 3.3 The SPSO has confirmed that they would be moving to a quarterly submission of complaint handling statistical data from all Councils. This was intended to ease the collation of management information on an annual basis. Inverclyde Council agreed to supply this statistical data each quarter, as it is currently prepared on a quarterly and annual basis. The draft report is issued to LACHN for discussion at the network meeting and any inconsistencies in data interpretation and analysis is resolved before the formal annual submission to the SPSO each year.
- 3.4 Inverclyde Council, the HSCP and both ALEOs implemented revised model complaint handling procedures on 1 April 2021.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council, the HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde received and handled 317 complaints and closed 315 complaints within the relevant period.
- 4.2 Section 3 of the appended report provides a comparison of the complaint handling performance by the Council from 2017/18 to 2021/22. Members will note that, in comparison with volumes received during 2020/21, there has been an increase in the overall number of complaints dealt with by Inverclyde Council and the HSCP. Inverclyde Leisure's statistics show a decrease in the complaints received. This appears to be the normalising of volumes post pandemic.
- 4.3 Section 3.6 to 3.9 of the appended report shows the breakdown of complaint volumes per service and the percentage of complaints per service area against the total number of complaints received for the reporting period. The numbers remains relatively low within some services however; they are proportionately higher in those services that have historically received higher complaint volumes based on the nature of work undertaken. Riverside Inverclyde was the only area, which did not receive a complaint during the reporting period.
- 4.4 Section 3.10 – 3.13 of the appended report shows the outcome of complaint investigations at each stage of the complaint handling procedure, the collective view of which is summarised below:
- 78 complaints were upheld across all complaint stages;
 - 58 complaints were partially upheld across all complaint stages;
 - 158 complaints were not upheld across all complaint stages; and
 - 21 complaints were resolved across all complaint stages
- 4.5 Section 3.14 to 3.21 of the appended report details the Council's responses to complaints at each of the complaint stages. The HSCP's performance has shown strain in timescale management due

to the complexity of complaints being received. This should remain an area of focus for the HSCP, as well as for the Council, as there is scope to improve timescale management in some complaints that exceed the expected timescales across all stages of the complaints.

- 4.6 Stage one of the complaint handling procedure should be attempted where there are straightforward issues potentially easily resolved with little or no investigation. This should be completed within 5 working days. If the service user remains unhappy following the stage one complaint investigation, they can request that their complaint be escalated to stage two of the procedure. The performance of complaints handled at stage one of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below.

Stage 1 Complaints	Indicators 2021/22	Indicators 2020/21	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints closed	222	200	An increase of 22 complaints
% of complaints closed on time within 5 days (including cases where a time extension was approved)	83%	86%	3% reduction of on time responses
Average number of days taken to close complaints	4.1 days	5 days	A positive reduction in time by 0.9 days

Outcome of complaints	No of Cases 2021/22	%	No of case 2020/21	%	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints upheld & as % of all stage 1 complaints	68 cases	30.6%	54 cases	27%	An increase of 3.6%
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all stage 1 complaints	36 cases	16.2%	38 cases	19%	A reduction of 2.8%
No of complaints not upheld & as a % of all stage 1 complaints	103 cases	46.4%	108 cases	54%	A reduction of 7.6%
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all stage 1 complaints	15 cases	6.8%	n/a	n/a	No historic data due to introduction of new outcome 1/4/21

- 4.6 A stage two complaint is generally for complex, or for serious issues where a thorough investigation will be undertaken. It should also be used for complaints that cannot be resolved at the stage one of the procedure. This typically requires a more thorough investigation to establish facts prior to reaching conclusion and allows 20 days for the investigation to be completed. The performance of complaints handled at stage two of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below.

Stage 2 Complaints	Indicators 2021/22	Indicators 2020/21	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints closed	73	35	An increase of 38 complaints

% of complaints closed on time within 20 days & where we applied time extension	63%	74.3%	A decrease of 11.3%
Average number of days taken to close complaint	23.1 days	16.2 days	6.9 days longer and 3.1 days outside 20 days

Outcome of complaints	No of Cases 2021/22	%	No of cases 2020/21	%	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints upheld & as % of all stage 2 complaints	9 cases	12.3%	13 cases	37.1%	A reduction of 24.8%
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all stage 2 complaints	16 cases	21.9%	11 cases	31.4%	A reduction of 9.5%
No of complaints not upheld & as a % of all stage 2 complaints	42 cases	57.5%	11 cases	31.4%	An increase of 26.1%
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all stage 2 complaints	6 cases	8.2%	n/a	n/a	No historic data to compare due to introduction of new outcome 1/4/21

4.7 An Escalated stage two complaints is one where the service user remains dissatisfied with the way the Council dealt with their complaint at frontline resolution, the complainant can request a detailed investigation under stage two of our complaints handling procedure it allows 20 days for completing the investigation. This must be undertaken before the complainant can take their complaint to the SPSO to review. The performance of complaints handled at escalated stage two of the complaint handling procedure has been summarised in the table below.

Escalated Stage 2 Complaints	Indicators 2021/22	Indicators 2020/21	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints closed	20	15	A reduction of 5 complaints
% of complaints closed on time within 20 days & where we applied time extension	65%	80%	15% a reduction in those meeting timescale
Average number of days taken to close complaints	19.8 days	15.1 days	An increase of 4.7 days

Escalated stage 2 outcomes	No of cases 2021/22	%	No of cases 2020/21	%	Trend when comparing to 2020/21
No of complaints upheld & as % of all of all escalated stage 2 complaints	1 case	5%	3 cases	20%	a reduction of 15%
No of complaints partially upheld & as % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	6 cases	30%	3 cases	20%	An increase of 10%
No of complaints not upheld & as % of all	13 cases	65%	9	60%	An increase of 5%

escalated stage 2 complaints					
No of complaints resolved & as a % of all escalated stage 2 complaints	0 cases	0%	n/a	n/a	No historic data to compare due to introduction of new outcome 1/4/21

- 4.8 Section 4 of the appended reported provides further detail on the next steps that the Council requires to take in implementing the Customer Satisfaction Survey for complaint handling to meet the expectations set out by the SPSO. Implementation has been delayed however will be revisited in the coming year to develop the technical process for implementing the survey. The HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde will also be required to develop their processes for implementation to meet this requirement. Engagement with the appropriate officers will be undertaken to support the delivery of this work.
- 4.9 Section 5 of the appended report provides an overview of service improvement recording which commenced in November 2016. This has been embedded within services and is reported quarterly to Directorate Management Teams. The HSCP requires to implement this process within their complaint handling process in the coming year. The Council will also be required to publish learnings taken from complaints on a quarterly basis, along with statistical information, to maintain compliance with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) expected requirements of all Scottish local authorities.
- 4.10 Section 6 of the appended report provides detailed information on the complaints which were taken to the SPSO. The SPSO received 12 complaints for Inverclyde Council, which were dealt with at early resolution stage, and no complaints were investigated. The SPSO recognised that the Council had demonstrated good complaint handling in 6 of the complaints they reviewed. The SPSO received 4 complaints for the HSCP, which were dealt with at early resolution stage, and no complaints were investigated. The SPSO also recognised good complaint handling in one of the complaints they reviewed for the HSCP. This reflects a reduction in the complaints received by the SPSO for both Inverclyde Council and the HSCP. It is also an indication of good complaint handling where a right of review was exercised, as the complainant remained dissatisfied with the Council's handling of their complaint.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman – Complaints Determined by Authority and Outcome
 (tab 4 Joint Health & Social Care Cases Determined and tab 6 Local Authority)
https://www.spsso.org.uk/sites/spso/files/communications_material/statistics/2021-22/AnnualStatisticsComplaintsDeterminedbyAuthorityandOutcome2021-22.pdf

- 4.11 The Council is responsible for ensuring the services provided by Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde meet the required standards and adhere to the complaint handling procedure. In doing this, the Council must establish mechanisms to identify and act on complaint handling performance issues found.
- 4.12 Inverclyde Leisure implemented their complaint handling procedure in March 2017 and have provided their management information for inclusion into the Council's quarterly and annual reporting requirements to the SPSO.
- 4.13 Riverside Inverclyde implemented their complaint handling procedure from 1 April 2018 and provide quarterly statistical information for inclusion in the reporting for the Council. The volume of complaints from this ALEO continue to be extremely low with an entire year noted where no complaints were received.
- 4.14 6 monthly reports on progress throughout the year are submitted to the Directorate Management Teams for overall review and any actions on a service specific basis and to ensure awareness of the impact on staff resources

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

5.2 Finance

There are no financial implications from this report.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal or risk implications from this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

This report helps deliver Corporate Plan Organisational Priority 9 – to deliver services that are responsive to community needs and underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team have reviewed the contents of the Annual Report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Inverclyde Council
Annual Complaints Report
1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE.....	3
3. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE.....	3
3.1. Indicator 1: the number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population.....	4
Table: Number of Complaints received per 1,000 of the population	4
3.4. Indicator 2 the number of complaints closed at each stage of the complaint handling procedure.....	4
Table: Percentage of complaints closed at each stage of the procedure	4
Table: Total number of complaints received by each area	4
Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 1	5
Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 2.....	5
Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at escalated stage 2.....	5
Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q1 & Q2.....	6
Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q3 & Q4.....	6
Chart: Annual complaint volumes received 2021/22.....	7
3.11. Indicator 3 – Outcome of Complaint Investigations.....	7
Chart: Complaint Investigation Outcome by each complaint stage.....	7
3.14. Indicator 4 – average timescales for resolving complaints.....	8
Table: Collective complaint handling – average timescale for resolving complaints	8
Table: Inverclyde Council’s Consolidated Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints	9
Table: Inverclyde Council Only Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints.....	10
Table: HSCP Complaint Handling Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints.....	10
Table: Inverclyde Leisure Performance *** – average timescale for resolving complaints	11
Table: Riverside Inverclyde **** – average timescale for resolving complaints.....	11
3.20. Indicator 5 – Performance against timescales for Stage 1 Complaints:	11
Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 1.....	11
3.22. Indicator 5 – Performance against timescales for Stage 2 Complaints:	12
Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 2.....	12
3.24. Indicator 5 - Performance against timescales escalated stage 2 complaints:.....	12
Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages escalated stage 2	12
3.26. Indicator 6 – Extensions to Complaint Timescales:.....	12
4. Indicator 7 – Customer Satisfaction Survey.....	13

5. Indicator 8 – Learning from Complaints	13
6. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO) – RIGHT OF REVIEW	13
Table: Complaints received by the SPSO for a review	13
Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for Inverclyde Council...	14
Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for HSCP	15
7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.....	15
8. POSITIVE COMMENTS	15
9. TRAINING	16
10. CONCLUSION.....	16

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Inverclyde Council, along with all other Scottish Local Authorities, follows a model complaint handling procedure (MCHP) which was created by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). This report demonstrates how Inverclyde Council has performed against the 8 key performance indicators that are set by the SPSO and provides an overview of improvements made to services along with positive feedback from service users.

2. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

- 2.1. Inverclyde Council co-ordinates the reporting of complaints to the SPSO and this includes the HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde. Each area is responsible for recording their own complaints and providing their management information to Inverclyde Council to enable the consolidated statistical report to be produced quarterly and annually.
- 2.2. The procedure provides a quick, simple, streamlined process with a strong focus on local, early resolution. This enables issues or concerns dealt with close to the event, which gave rise to the service user making the complaint. As far as possible, the complainant should be actively and positively engaged with the process from the outset.
- 2.3. Stage one of the complaint handling procedure should be attempted where there are straightforward issues potentially easily resolved with little or no investigation. This should be completed within 5 working days. If the service user remains unhappy following the stage one complaint investigation, they can request that their complaint be escalated to stage two of the procedure.
- 2.4. Stage two of the complaint handling procedure should be used for those matters, which are complex, or for serious issues where a thorough investigation will be undertaken. It should also be used for complaints that cannot be resolved at the stage one of the procedure. This typically requires a more thorough investigation in order to establish facts prior to reaching conclusion. The complaint points and resolution outcome sought is agreed with the complainant. This complaint should be completed within 20 working days. Should the service user remain unhappy with the investigation of the stage 2 complaint they can exercise their right of review and request the SPSO to look at the issues raised and determine whether they can investigate the matter further.
- 2.5. Escalated stage two: Where the service user remains dissatisfied with the way the Council dealt with their complaint at frontline resolution, the complainant can request a detailed investigation under stage two of our complaints handling procedure. This must be undertaken before the complainant can take their complaint to the SPSO to review.
- 2.6. The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman reviews complaint outcomes that are referred to them by the service user and decide whether they should investigate the complaint.

3. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE

- 3.1. Indicator 1: the number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population.
- 3.2. To allow a fair comparison to be made across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities, this indicator looks at the figure of “Complaints per 1,000 of the population”. The total number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population in Inverclyde Council during the reporting period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022 was 4.1 complaints. This reflects an increase of 0.6 when comparing the indicator to the same period last year. The population of Inverclyde Council is estimated to be at around 77,060 residents.
- 3.3. This means that there were 4.1 complaints per 1,000 of the population, or roughly one resident in 243 made a complaint about services. A comparison of this indicator over the past 3 years is shown in the table below.

Table: Number of Complaints received per 1,000 of the population

Year	No of Complaints	Complaints Per 1,000 of the population
2021/22	317	4.1
2020/21	269	3.5
2019/20	389	5.0

- 3.4. Indicator 2 the number of complaints closed at each stage of the complaint handling procedure.
- 3.5. In the reporting period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde Leisure and the HSCP received and handled 317 complaints and closed 315 complaints. It should be noted that Riverside Inverclyde did not receive any complaints. The table below shows the percentage of complaints received at each stage of the complaint procedure.

Table: Percentage of complaints closed at each stage of the procedure

Area	Stage 1 % of all closed complaints	Stage 2 % of all closed complaints	Esc stage 2 % of all closed complaints
Inverclyde Council	79.5%	12.2%	8.1%
HSCP	34.5%	65.5%	0%
Inverclyde Leisure	58.3%	41.7%	0%
Riverside Inverclyde	0%	0%	0%
Collective Performance	70.4%	23.1%	6.3%

- 3.6. The tables below show the number of complaints received and closed in total, as well as at each stage of the complaint handling procedure for each area over the last 5 years for comparison

Table: Total number of complaints received by each area

Area	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Inverclyde Council	244	213	274	256	288
HSCP	61	39	73	44	55
Inverclyde Leisure	12	14	40	*29	8
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	2	13	

*Inverclyde Leisure had a loss of data for the data covering the period 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2018 which will have impacted the extent of complaints finally recorded in 2018/19 the collective reporting of complaint

Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 1

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Inverclyde Council	195	162	220	214	225
HSCP	20	25	39	17	33
Inverclyde Leisure	7	13	40	29	7
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	2	12	

Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at stage 2

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Inverclyde Council	30	24	20	8	17
HSCP	38	10	27	22	26
Inverclyde Leisure	5	0	0	0	0
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	1	

Table: Total number of complaints received by each area at escalated stage 2

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Inverclyde Council	20	12	21	13	21
HSCP	0	1	3	0	0
Inverclyde Leisure	0	1	0	0	0
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	0	

3.7. The Council actively published information on the Council's website and on social media for residents to understand the implications of potential delays, which could be encountered, with the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19). In particular, specific messages were shared on the Council's complaint handling website pages to manage the expectations of service users and to explain that the Council may have to apply extended timescales for complaint handling. In addition to this the Council encouraged service users to refrain from submitting complaints about the following matters:

- Delays with processing complaints,
- Delays with complaint responses,
- Matters which were likely to resolve themselves within the next few weeks/months,
- Delays in service delivery which were the result of organisations having to cope with COVID-19 and which were non-essential.

3.8. Emphasis was placed on the Council's appreciation of service user's patience whilst the Council worked through these unprecedented circumstances, particularly if the service received had fallen below expectations or if the response to a complaint had taken the Council longer than the stated timescale. The Council also signposted service users to the additional information published on the SPSO's website on the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on complaints.

3.9. The tables below provide a monthly breakdown of complaints closed and the percentage of complaints received within each service each quarter covering the reporting period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. For Inverclyde Leisure, Riverside Inverclyde and HSCP the breakdown is only provided for the annualised volumes.

Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q1 & Q2

Service Area	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Qtr. 1 21/22	% of complaints	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sept 21	Qtr. 2 21/22	% of complaints
Chief Exec Office	0	0	0	0	-	0	1	0	1	1.4%
Education	5	6	9	20	27%	1	3	6	10	14%
Culture, Comm & Educ Res	0	0	2	2	2.6%	2	5	2	9	13%
Org Dev, Policy & Comms	0	0	0	0	-	1	0	0	1	1.4%
Finance	2	1	2	5	6.8%	3	1	5	9	13%
Legal & Democratic Services	0	0	1	1	1.3%	0	0	1	1	1.4%
Property Services	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Regeneration & Planning	0	0	4	4	5.4%	0	1	2	3	4.3%
Environ & Com Svs	4	5	5	14	19%	2	5	3	10	14.4%
Public Protection & COVID Rec	1	2	7	10	13.6%	1	2	2	5	7.2%
Roads Shared Service	3	1	5	9	12.3%	3	0	2	5	7.2%
Inverclyde Leisure				1	1.3%				4	4.79%
7Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-
HSCP				8	10%				11	15.9%
Total				74					69	

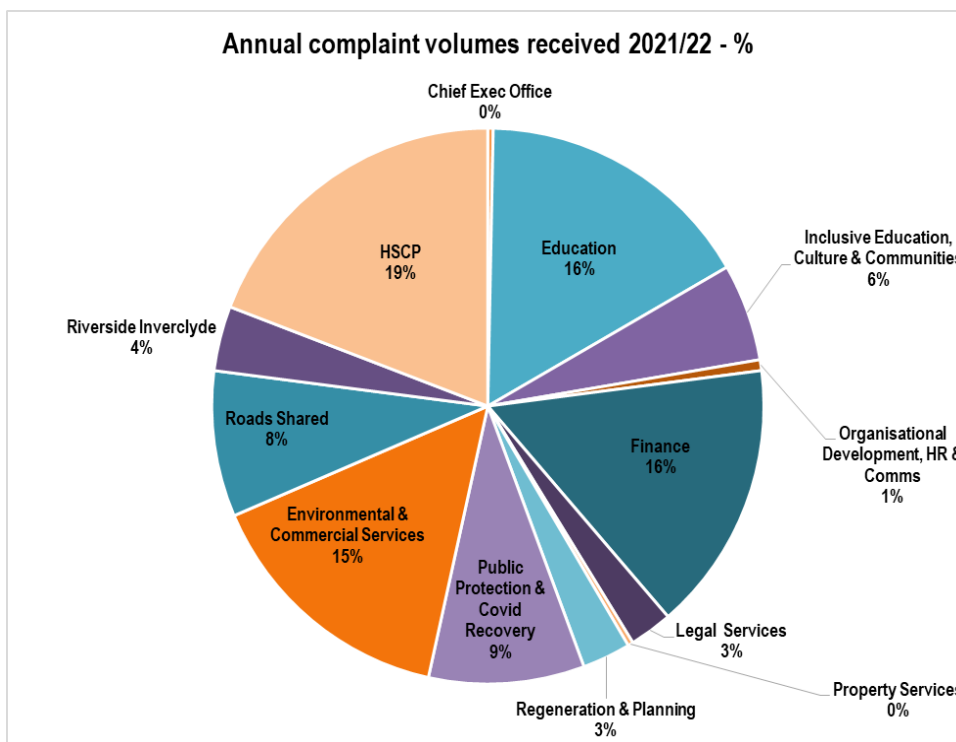
Table: Breakdown of closed complaints by service areas each quarter Q3 & Q4

Service Area	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Qtr3 21/22	% of complaints	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Qtr. 4 21/22	% of complaints	21/22 Year End Total	% of Complaint
Chief Exec Office	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	1	0.3%
Education	4	2	3	9	15.2%	3	5	6	14	12%	53	16.4%
Culture, Comm & Educ Res	2	0	0	2	3.3%	0	2	3	5	4.3%	18	5.6%
Org Dev, Policy & Comms	0	1	0	1	1.6%	0	0	0	0	-	2	0.6%
Finance	2	4	2	8	13.5%	14	5	9	28	24.1%	50	17.3%
Legal & Democratic Services	1	0	1	2	3.3%	2	0	2	4	3.4%	8	2.5%
Property Services	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	1	0.8%	1	0.3%
Regen & Planning	2	0	0	2	3.3%	0	0	0	0	-	9	2.8%
Environ & Com Svs	5	4	1	10	16.9%	2	3	8	13	12	47	14%
Public Protection & COVID Rec	2	3	2	7	13.5%	4	0	2	6	4.3%	28	8%
Roads Shared Ser	1	0	1	2	3.3%	2	4	5	11	9.4%	27	8.5%

Inverclyde Leisure				0	-				7	6%	12	3.7%
Riverside Inverclyde	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	-
HSCP				15	25.4%				27	23.2%	61	19.2%
Totals				59					116		317	

3.10. Outlined in the chart below is the percentage of complaints received by each service compared against the total number of complaints received for the reporting period. Riverside Inverclyde and the Chief Executive’s Office is the only areas that that did not receive any complaints in the reporting period.

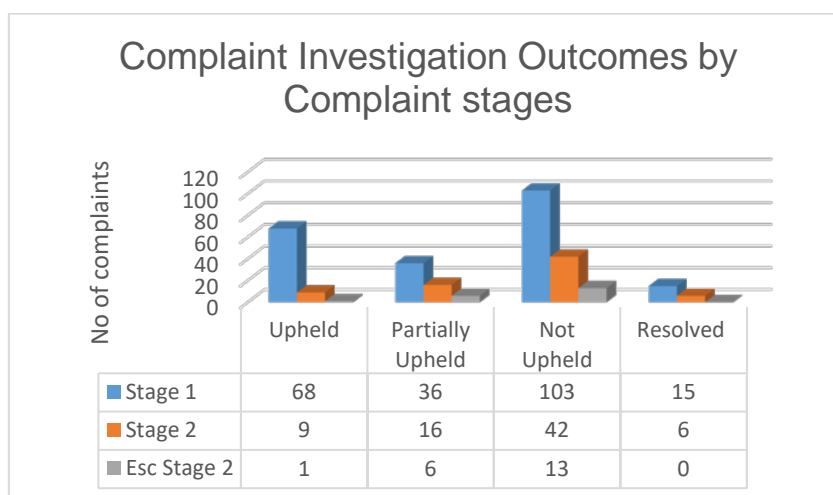
Chart: Annual complaint volumes received 2021/22



3.11. Indicator 3 – Outcome of Complaint Investigations

3.12. The graph below outlines the outcomes of investigations of all complaints at each of the complaint stages. For every complaint the Council investigates, the service user will be contacted and an explanation of the outcome of the complaint investigation will be confirmed as being either upheld, not upheld, partially upheld or resolved.

Chart: Complaint Investigation Outcome by each complaint stage



- 3.13. In summary there were:
- 78 complaints were upheld across all complaint stages
 - 58 complaints were partially upheld across all complaint stages
 - 158 completed were not upheld across all complaint stages
 - 21 complaints were resolved across all complaint stages.

3.14. **Indicator 4 – average timescales for resolving complaints.**

3.15. The table below outlines the Inverclyde Council's collective performance measures on timescale management across all stages of the complaint procedure and covering the last 5 years for comparison purposes. The average time taken to close a complaint at each complaint stage has been:

- Stage 1 - 4.1 days;
- Stage 2 - 23.1 days; and
- Escalated stage 2 - 19.8 days.

Table: Collective complaint handling – average timescale for resolving complaints

Stage 1 Frontline Resolution	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	222	200	287	272	265
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	187	138	229	222	214
% Complaints meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	84.3%	85.2%	83.6%	82%	81%
No of complaints closed at stage 1 as a % of all complaints closed	70.5%	80%	80.2%	86.1%	81.3%
Ave working days taken stage 1 complaints	4.1 days	4.6 days	3.7 days	4.1 days	4.4 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	73	35	47	31	40
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	46	19	34	21	31
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	63%	79.2%	76.7%	68%	76.6%
No of complaints closed at stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	23.2%	14%	13.1%	9.8%	12.3%
Ave working days taken stage 2 complaints	23.1 days	15.2 days	18 days	18.1 days	15.5 days
Escalated Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	25	15	24	13	21

No of complaints – closed at escalated stage 2 within 20 days	13	11	14	13	18
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	65%	91.7%	75%	100%	85.7%
No of complaints closed at escalated stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	6.3%	6%	6.7%	4.1%	6.4%
Ave working days taken escalated stage 2 complaints	19.8 days	16.6 days	18.3 days	14 days	13.8days

3.16. The tables below outline the management of complaints within the prescribed timescale for each complaint stage and broken down by each area's complaint handling performance.

Table: Inverclyde Council's Consolidated Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints

Stage 1 Frontline Resolution	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	222	200	287	272	265
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	187	138	229	222	214
% Complaints meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	84.3%	85.2%	83.6%	82%	81%
No of complaints closed at stage 1 as a % of all complaints closed	70.5%	80%	80.2%	86.1%	81.3%
Ave working days taken stage 1 complaints	4.1 days	4.6 days	3.7 days	4.1 days	4.4 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	73	35	47	31	40
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	46	19	34	21	31
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	63%	79.2%	76.7%	68%	76.6%
No of complaints closed at stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	23.2%	14%	13.1%	9.8%	12.3%
Ave working days taken stage 2 complaints	23.1 days	15.2 days	18 days	18.1 days	15.5 days
Escalated Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints received	25	15	24	13	21
No of complaints – closed at escalated stage 2 within 20 days	13	11	14	13	18
% Complaints Meeting timescale (includes complaints that were time extended & completed on time)	65%	91.7%	75%	100%	85.7%
No of complaints closed at escalated stage 2 as a % of all complaints closed	6.3%	6%	6.7%	4.1%	6.4%
Ave working days taken escalated stage 2 complaints	19.8 days	16.6 days	18.3 days	14.0 days	13.9days

3.17. The tables below outline the management of complaints within the prescribed timescale for each complaint stage and broken down by each area's complaint handling performance. The comparable data is not available for Inverclyde Leisure, as they have adopted the reporting of complaints within the period 2017/18.

Table: Inverclyde Council Only Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints

Stage 1	2021 /22	2020 /21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017 /18
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	167	138	172	171	182*
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	87.4%	85.2%	87%	80%	78%
Ave working days taken stage 1	3.6 days	4.6 days	3.9 days	4.4 days	3.8 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	23	19	14	7	9**
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	76.7%	79.2%	80%	88%	90%
Ave working days taken stage 2	17 days	15.2 days	16.1 days	18.4 days	16.3 days
Stage 2 Escalated Investigation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	13	11	14	13	18
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	68.4%	91.7%	81.8%	100%	86%
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	20.8 days	16.6 days	15.7 days	14 days	13.8 days

*One complaint has been included within stage one resolution as time extension was granted allowing 10 days for the complaint to be resolved and reported within timescales.

** Two complaints have been included in the stage two resolutions as time extension was granted allowing 25 days for the complaint to be resolved and reported within timescale

Table: HSCP Complaint Handling Performance – average timescale for resolving complaints

Stage 1	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	15	14	39	12	22
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	75%	56%	72%	71%	88%
Ave working days taken stage 1	4.4 days	9.3 days	5.3 days	7.5 days	4.1 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021 /22	2020/21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017/18
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	20	6	27	13	18
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	52.6%	60%	74%	59%	79%
Ave working days taken stage 2	30.8 days	22.3 days	19.5 days	18.2 days	18.2 days
Stage 2 Escalated Investigation	2021 /22	2020/21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017/18
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	1	3	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	-	0%	0%	0	N/A
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	-	27 days	31 days	0	0

*** Inverclyde Leisure data only available from the period 2017/18

Table: Inverclyde Leisure Performance * – average timescale for resolving complaints**

Stage 1	2021/22	2020 /21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017 /18
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	6	13	40	29	5
% Complaints Meeting timescale	85.7%	100%	100%	100%	83%
Ave working days taken stage 1	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day	3 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021/22	2020 /21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017 /18
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	5	1	0	0	2
% Complaints Meeting timescale	100%	100%	0	0	67%
Ave working days taken stage 2	10 days	10 days	0	0	13.3 days
Stage 2 Escalated Investigation	2021/22	2020 /21	2019/20	2018 /19	2017 /18
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale	-	0	0	0	N/A
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	-	0	0	0	0

Table: Riverside Inverclyde ** – average timescale for resolving complaints**

Stage 1	2021 /22	2020/21	2019/ 20	2018 /19
No of complaints – closed at stage 1 within 5 days	0	0	2	12
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	-	N/A	2	100%
Ave working days taken stage 1	0	N/A	2 days	1.6 days
Stage 2 Investigation	2021 /22	2020/21	2019/ 20	2018 /19
No of complaints – closed at stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	1
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	-	N/A	0	100%
Ave working days taken stage 2	0	N/A	0	14 days
Stage 2 Escalated Investigation	2021 /22	2020/21	2019/ 20	2018 /19
No of complaints – closed at esc stage 2 within 20 days	0	0	0	0
% Complaints Meeting timescale inc those time extended	-	N/A	0	0
Ave working days taken esc stage 2	0	N/A	0	0

****Riverside Inverclyde data only available from the period 2018/19

3.18. Services must maintain focus on ensuring complaints received are recorded and that officers follow the complaint handling procedure. Particular attention should be given to the timescales for resolving complaints at stage one and stage two. When comparing in isolation the Council's complaint handling performance it is noted that the timescales taken to resolve complaints have increased at all stages, which affects the average days reported. Most of the delays have been during periods when services were under considerable pressure responding to the COVID19 pandemic.

3.19. The average days taken to resolve complaints in all stages of the complaint procedure have increased in HSCP's complaint performance. Most of the delays have been during periods when HSCP services were under considerable pressure responding to the COVID19 pandemic and also as a result of the availability of management resources. This will be an area for focus in the coming year.

3.20. **Indicator 5 – Performance against timescales for Stage 1 Complaints:**

3.21. The Council aims to close all stage 1 complaints within 5 working days. In 2021/22 the Council closed 222 complaints, with 186 of these closed within timescale which equates to 83.8% response within timescale. 7 (3.2%) complaints were closed after an extension was agreed with the service user.

Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 1

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No extension	with extension	%
2021/22	222	186	83.8%	7		3.2%
2020/21	200	169	84.5%	5		2.5%
2019/20	287	229	79.8%	27		9.4%
2018/19	272	222	82%	21		7.7%
2017/18	265	214	80.8%	9		3.4%

3.22. Indicator 5 – Performance against timescales for Stage 2 Complaints:

3.23. The Council aims to close all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. In 2021/22, the Council closed 73 complaints, with 46 of these complaints being closed within timescale, which equates to 63% response within timescale. 5 complaints (6.8%) were closed after an extension was agreed with the service user.

Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages stage 2

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No extension	with extension	%
2021/22	73	46	63%	5		6.8%
2020/21	35	26	74.3%	3		8.6%
2019/20	47	34	72.3%	11		23.4%
2018/19	31	21	68%	10		32.3%
2017/18	40	31	77.5%	10		25%

3.24. Indicator 5 - Performance against timescales escalated stage 2 complaints:

3.25. The Council aims to close all escalated stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. In 2021/22, the Council closed 20 complaints, with 13 of these complaints being closed within timescale which equates to 65% response within timescale. 2 (10%) of complaints were closed after an extension was agreed with the service user.

Table: Number of complaints closed within timescale and percentages escalated stage 2

Reporting period	No of complaints closed	Within timescale	%	No extension	with extension	%
2021/22	20	13	65%	2		10%
2020/21	15	12	80%	0		0%
2019/20	24	14	58.3%	6		25%
2018/19	13	13	100%	1		7.7%
2017/18	21	18	85.7%	3		14.3%

3.26. Indicator 6 – Extensions to Complaint Timescales:

3.27. The complaint handling procedure allows officers to seek an extension to the timescales permitted for stage one and stage two complaint investigations. The maximum period permitted to extend the timescale of a complaint is 5 days for both complaint stages. This indicator reports the number and percentage of complaints at each stage of the procedure, which were closed after an extension to the 5 day, or 20 day timescale was authorised.

Complaint stage	No of extensions agreed	% as a total of all complaints
Stage 1 complaints	7 extensions were agreed	3.2% of total complaints

Stage 2 complaints	5 extensions were agreed	6.8% of total complaints
Escalated stage 2 complaints	2 extensions were agreed	10% of total complaints

4. Indicator 7 – Customer Satisfaction Survey

4.1. The SPSO has recommended that all Local Authorities should be completing customer satisfaction surveys with service users regularly to gain true insight on how well they are handling complaints. This standardised approach has been delayed this year to allow the development of a straight through process within the complaint handling system to support capturing this feedback in an efficient manner. The Council is developing the process to enable a customer satisfaction survey to be automatically issued once a complaint is closed. The survey will seek feedback using a standard set of questions that have been agreed for use by the SPSO as part of the collection of feedback to assist with suggestions and opportunities for improvement. The HSCP, Inverclyde Leisure, Riverside Inverclyde are also required to implement the survey being issued to complainants.

5. Indicator 8 – Learning from Complaints

- 5.1. The Council is committed to reflecting on occasions when it does not get it right in order to highlight opportunities for improvement. As such, where a complaint has been upheld or partially upheld, the service determines what actions are required to support improvement and prevent a repeat of circumstances that led to the complaint.
- 5.2. Service improvement recording commenced in November 2016 for Inverclyde Council only. Service improvement tracking requires to be developed for the HSCP as this is not currently in place, although work is underway to implement this.
- 5.3. The Council shares the outcomes of complaint investigations and a selection of actions taken as a result of complaints on a quarterly basis with the Corporate Management Team.

6. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO) – RIGHT OF REVIEW

6.1. Following a stage two investigation and written response, if a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation, they have a right of review through the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The table below outlines the number complaints received at the SPSO for Inverclyde Council and HSCP.

Table: Complaints received by the SPSO for a review

Year	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Inverclyde Council	12	7	15	15	15
HSCP	4	3	11	6	Not recorded

6.2. The SPSO reviewed 12 complaints for Inverclyde Council of which 2 complaints were reviewed at the advice stage and these complaint were unable to be taken forward and 10 complaints were reviewed all at the early resolution stage of the procedure the outcome of these reviews were as follows:

- 6 complaints were recognised as examples of good complaint handling;
- 3 complaints were reviewed and insufficient benefit would be gained from further investigation of the complaint; and,
- 1 case was taken forward prematurely to the SPSO and not progressed.

6.3. There were no complaints taken through the investigation stage by the SPSO. Overall this reflects an increase of 7 complaints when comparing data to the same period last year. The table below outlines the SPSO's published statistics for Inverclyde Council.

Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for Inverclyde Council

STAGE	OUTCOME GROUP	Inverclyde Council
Advice	Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))	0
	Premature	0
	Unable to proceed	2
	Total	2
Early Resolution	Cause and impact test not met (s 5 (3))	0
	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	3
	Discretion – alternative action proposed	0
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	0
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	6
	Discretion – referred back	0
	Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	0
	Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))	0
	Organisation not in jurisdiction	0
	Premature	1
	Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))	0
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	0
	Time limit (s 10)	0
	Unable to proceed	0
Total	10	
Investigation	Fully upheld	0
	Not upheld	0
	Outcome not achievable	0
	Resolved	0
	Some upheld	0
	Total	0
TOTAL		12

6.4. The SPSO reviewed four complaints for the HSCP and no complaints were investigated. Two complaints were reviewed at the advice stage and were referred prematurely to the SPSO. A further 2 cases were reviewed at the early resolution,

of which 1 case was recognised as an example of good complaint handling while the other complaint was referred back to the HSCP to look into matters further. Overall this reflects an increase of 1 complaints when comparing data to the same period last year. The table below outlines the SPSO's published statistics for the HSCP.

Table: SPSO breakdown by reviews by stage and outcomes for HSCP

STAGE	OUTCOME GROUP	IHSCP
Advice	Discretion – alternative route used or available	0
	Premature	2
	Unable to proceed	0
	Total	2
Early Resolution	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	0
	Discretion – alternative action proposed	0
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	0
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	1
	Discretion – referred back	1
	Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	0
	Organisation not in jurisdiction	0
	Premature	0
	Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))	0
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	0
	Time limit (s 10)	0
	Unable to proceed	0
	Total	2
	Investigation	Fully upheld
Not duly made or withdrawn		0
Not upheld		0
Some upheld		0
Total		0
TOTAL		4

7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

7.1. The Council reports and publishes its complaint statistics in line with performance indicators published by the SPSO. Some aspects of the indicators are currently being developed and will be included in the core performance indicators applicable to all sectors (similar to those released in the draft MCHP).

8. POSITIVE COMMENTS

8.1. Throughout the year the Council receives positive comments and compliments from service users across all services. These recognise where employees have gone above and beyond the normal standard of service delivery and these compliments are shared with the service teams concerned.

9. TRAINING

- 9.1. Complaint handling training forms part of the induction process for all new staff joining the Council. Line managers identify which new staff that require training, which involves completion of the complaint handling procedure e-learning module followed by attendance at a digital or face-to-face training course on the more practical aspects of dealing with complaints using the complaint handling procedure. Each year, the Education Service provides an Induction Training Programme to all relevant staff who will be required to deal with complaints which also includes the use of the complaint handling system training.
- 9.2. Additionally, training was delivered to relevant staff involved in the handling of complaints in preparation for the changes that would be introduced when the new Model Complaint Handling Procedure was introduced on 5 April 2021.
- 9.3. Refresher training is provided on a regular basis by request from service areas and where it is deemed necessary, this includes the use of the complaint handling system too. All training is tracked using personal individual development plans. A total of 93 hours training has been delivered during the course of 2021/22.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1. The Council is committed to investigating, learning from and taking action as a result of individual complaints where it is found that standards have fallen below the level expected and where services could be improved. By listening to the views of service users who make a complaint, the Council can improve its services.
- 10.2. In the coming year the key action for services to focus on reducing the time taken to respond to complaints timely at each of the complaint stages where this is possible, particularly where the complexity of complaints has evolved as evidenced in complaints handling during this period and where we exceed the statutory response timescale. The Council will be operating through another challenging period and balancing this alongside all other priorities will be essential whilst managing resources carefully required to support this.