

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **18 September 2023**

Title: **An overview of corporate complaints**

Report of: **Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery**

Ward(s): **All**

Purpose of report: **To update Members on the Local Government Office (LGO) annual review (22-23) of complaints received and investigated.**

Officer recommendation(s): **(1) To note the report**

Reasons for recommendations: **To provide Members with an opportunity to discuss the LGO annual review of complaints**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Every year the LGO conduct an annual review of complaints received and investigated by them. This report explores the annual report for 2022-2023.

2 Outcomes

2.1 During the 2022/2023 year there were a total of 373 corporate complaints received for Eastbourne Borough Council.

305 (81.79%) were resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process
68 (18.23%) were escalated to stage 2 of the complaints process

Of those 68 stage 2 complaints 14 (20.58%) were referred to the LGO. These complaints are broken down as follows:

HOUSING NEEDS	3	Housing Options and Homelessness: 2 Allocations: 1
CUSTOMER FIRST	7	Housing Benefit: 1 Council Tax: 2 Business Rates: 1 Disable Facilities Grant: 1 Private Housing: 1 Bereavement: 1
ENVIRONMENT FIRST	1	missed recycling: 1
TOURISM	2	Theatres: 2
PLANNING	1	Planning Objection: 1

2.2 Of the 14 referred to the LGO 6 (42.85%) were investigated by the LGO.

83% of complaints investigated by the LGO were upheld. This equates to 5 complaints out of the 6 investigated by the LGO.

Other organisations of similar size had an average score of 59% in this area.

The LGO were satisfied that 100% of cases they investigated and suggested recommendations for were completed. This is on par with other organisations.

The LGO found that in 0% of the 5 upheld cases that a satisfactory resolution had been provided by the council before it reached the ombudsman. This compares with 15% in other organisations.

3.1 Some comparisons can be drawn to neighbouring authorities:

Authority	Overall number referred to LGO	Upheld %
Eastbourne	14	83%
Lewes	9	75%
Wealden	20	100%
Hastings	18	100%
Rother	17	100%

Eastbourne is performing similarly to Lewes

3 Summary

4.1 In summary a low number of complaints are referred to the LGO compared to the number that were resolved internally.

The report does not suggest we are a badly performing council

There are a few learnings to come out of this annual report and a recent audit as follows:

- Training for all staff on handling complaints
- A focus on resolving complaints at stage 1 where possible.
- A focus on preventing complaints escalating to the LGO
- Focus on learning from past complaints, pushing each service area to create an action plan of learning

4 Financial appraisal

7.1 The report is for information purposes only

5 Legal implications

8.1 The report is for information purposes only

6 Risk management implications

9.1 The report is for information purposes only

7 Equality analysis

10.1 The report is for information purposes only

8 Environmental sustainability implications

11.1 The report is for information purposes only

9 Appendices - none

10 Background papers - none