

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

REFERENCE FROM GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:, 23RD JUNE, 2025

107 CORPORATE CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY REVIEW (REF) –

The report presented by the Operational Manager - Customer Relations and approved by Cabinet, made amendments to the Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy following the recent light touch review and had been referred to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration.

Amendments made to the Policy following the review were limited and sought to improve clarity of information and to ensure that contact details were up to date. There had been no changes to the processes and procedures for managing complaints.

The Council adopted the Welsh Government's Model Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy in July 2013. Complainants who remained unsatisfied after Stages 1 and 2 of the Policy could refer their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and as that process remained unchanged, the Council's adoption of the same remained the case.

Although the guidance had not changed and the process for dealing with complaints remained unaltered, regular review of the Policy was required for the following reasons:

- Continuous Improvement: Updating the Policy could help reflect lessons learned and enhance effectiveness.
- Relevance and Clarity: As the Council developed roles, procedures and contact points may change. Regular reviews kept the Policy accurate, clear and relevant to current operations.
- Citizen Trust and Transparency. A well-maintained Policy demonstrated to residents that the Council valued feedback and took complaints seriously, building trust and improving relationships.

The purpose of the Policy was to ensure that complainants' experiences were consistent and that a fair response was given to raising concerns and complaints with all Council services.

In April 2022 the Council implemented the Unacceptable Actions by Citizens and Social Media Policies. As a result of the most recent "light touch" review of the Policy:

- Additional information had been added in relation to handling of Welsh Language Complaints.

- To ensure that citizens had easy access to effective and timely resolution to their complaint, signposting information had been added for accessing complaint types not included in the Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy, such as Social Services.
- Based on feedback from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, the 'What Constitutes a Complaint' section and what was not included had been updated and clarified.
- An appendix had been added detailing alternative ways complaints processes could be accessed.

N. Ireland (Vice-Chair) referred to page 8 of the policy which outlined learning lessons being considered by the management team, and he queried whether a 6 monthly summary was sufficient. In response, the Operational Manager - Customer Relations advised that due to the number of complaints summary updated were being reported to the Strategic Leadership Team on a quarterly basis. In addition, real time information was available to managers specific to their own service area via a dashboard.

N. Ireland also queried whether there was enough narrative in the policy to show how the Council intended to learn from complaints.

Councillor J. Protheroe commented on the 26% of complaints that were wrongly categorised, whether that was because they sat outside the policy or by definition. It was important for residents to be made aware whether their complaint was actually a complaint. The Operational Manager - Customer Relations stated that all complaints would be reviewed in the first instance to ensure that it related to the policy, and it would then be referred to the relevant service area.

G. Chapman (Chair) stated that the policy was well written but did require some amendments as highlighted by N. Ireland and Councillor Protheroe.

Subsequently, it was

RESOLVED – T H A T the views of the Governance and Audit Committee in relation to the policy be referred to Cabinet. The comments relating to the following:

- For further clarity to be added in relation to the regularity of complaints being reported to the Strategic Leadership Team which would be on a quarterly basis rather than six monthly.
- That narrative be included to outline within the policy how the Council would learn from complaints received.
- For narrative to be included within the policy to outline what was a complaint and how the Council would address identified areas for improvement.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.