

Report of: Chief Executive
To: Standards Committee
Date: 9th March 2007 **Item No:**
Title of Report : Complaints Monitoring – Revenues and Benefits

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide Committee with information it requested about complaints received by Revenues and Benefits.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Rundle

Scrutiny Responsibility: N/A

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by: Sarah Fogden, Financial and Asset Management Business Manager and William Reed, Democratic Services Manager

Policy Framework: Corporate Governance

Recommendation(s): The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 1st December 2006, Committee resolved to ask the Head of the Corporate Secretariat to explain why there was a significant drop between complaints received at Stages 1 and 2 for Revenues and Benefits and the number of those complaints that were felt to be justified. The Committee commented that the total number of complaints received had decreased yet the number considered justified had increased.

2. Committee will recall that for the first six months of 2006/2007 the number of Stage 1 and 2 complaints for Revenues and Benefits was 72, compared to 80 for the same period in 2005/2006. However, for the same periods the number of justified complaints increased from 25 in 2005/2006 to 27 the following year.

Reasons for the Variation

3. The Head of Revenues and Benefits has confirmed that the total number of complaints is likely to have fallen because of the improved systems and processes operating within the business unit. These improvements have meant that the backlog of cases has been greatly reduced, thereby leading to a reduction in the number of complaints about delays being received.
4. The reason for the very slight increase in the total of justified complaints is hard to quantify and the figure is not considered significant. Certainly, no trend is apparent. Each complaint will have been fully investigated and, where necessary, corrective action taken.
5. The number of complaints received, and particularly those deemed justified, should be set in the context of approximately 10,000 people receiving Benefit at any one time and 54,000 Council Tax accounts.

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Background papers: None