

To: Cabinet
Date: 17 April 2024
Report of: Housing and Homelessness Panel
Title of Report: Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Panel of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Cllr Lizzy Diggins, Panel Chair
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Housing and Homelessness Panel met on 07 March 2024 to consider a report concerning the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment. It was recommended that the Panel consider the report and agree any recommendations.
2. The Panel would like to thank Councillor Linda Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing) and Bill Graves (Landlord Services Manager) for attending the meeting to present and answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager introduced the report, which set out the Council's Landlord Function self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Panel had reviewed the previous self-assessment in October 2023 against the current standards, however changes were proposed to the self-assessment, which were set out in the report. Following correspondence received by officers earlier in the week, compliance with the broader organisation-wide self-assessment relating to the single complaint handling code would not be a requirement until 2025/26, with reporting commencing in 2026/27. Officers were seeking clarity on what this meant for the Council.
4. The Panel raised a number of points, including the need to ensure the use of correct language regarding governance and reporting throughout the document; and criteria which were currently marked as 'non-compliant' where the Panel felt the Council could state it was at least partially compliant.
5. In particular, the Panel noted the Housing Ombudsman's reference to 'Governing Body' throughout the self-assessment criteria. This was not terminology which the Council used, therefore the Panel felt it was important that the Council defined what the term 'Governing Body' meant in respect of the Council, to ensure clarity across the organisation.

Recommendation 1: That the Council sets out its definition of what the 'Governing Body' referred to in the complaint handling code is in respect of the Council, to ensure clarity across the organisation.

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