

To: Cabinet
Date: 09 August 2023
Report of: Housing and Homelessness Panel
Title of Report: Update on Customer Complaints and Feedback

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:	Deliver More Affordable Housing; Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Housing, Homelessness and 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 02 August 2023 to consider an update on customer complaints and feedback. It was recommended that the Panel receive a presentation followed by an opportunity for discussion; and agree any recommendations.
2. The Panel would like to thank Councillor Linda Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing), Nerys Parry (Head of Housing Services) and Bill Graves (Landlord Services Manager) for attending the meeting to present and answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Nerys Parry, Head of Housing Services introduced the presentation and highlighted that the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill had received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023 to become the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. As a result, further changes in relation to housing complaints nationally were expected in the near future; and the Council had already received correspondence from the Housing Ombudsman. Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager delivered the presentation, which covered the period from October 2022 to March 2023.
4. The Panel asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the differences between Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints; oversight of the complaints process; and tracking emergent complaints trends.
5. The Panel noted responses to questions that the current ICT products had functionality to allow Oxford Direct Services to track, drill down into and analyse emergent trends within complaints. This functionality was due to be expanded to the Council in the near future. Officers advised that feedback was also sought through the recently launched 'Localz' text messaging service, which was proving to be transformational in terms of improved quality of service and emphasis on customer experience.
6. While the Panel agreed that progress was moving in the right direction, it agreed that it would be of benefit to the Council to focus on gaining more information related to customer experience in terms of communication more broadly, both through 'Localz' and other channels to ensure inclusivity. The Panel agreed that communication, and what tenants wanted or expected in terms of communication, was a key aspect of the service which should be prioritised for improvement.

Recommendation 1: That the Council seeks to gain more information relating to communication more broadly within the customer experience via Localz and other channels, to enable experiences to be tracked and analysed with a view to identifying and implementing improvements.

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