

To: Housing and Homelessness Panel
Date: 05 October 2023
Report of: Head of Housing Services
Title of Report: Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To inform panel members on the Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28
Recommendation(s): That the Panel resolves to:	
1. Note the self-assessment and agree any recommendations.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code – Self-Assessment

Introduction and background

1. The Housing Ombudsman Service was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and from April 2013 it took over responsibility for all new complaints about social housing. This includes complaints about the Council's relationship as landlord to its tenants or leaseholders. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman covers complaints that do not relate to the landlord function.
2. The Housing Ombudsman launched its Complaint Handling Code in July 2020 and updated and strengthened the code in April 2022. Part of the code requires landlords to complete a self-assessment against the requirements of the code. The requirements of the code and the self-assessment have increased significantly since the code was first launched.

3. This report introduces the Council’s self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code.

The Self-Assessment

4. The self-assessment is grouped in eight themes and then split by mandatory requirement and best practice requirements. The eight themes are:
 - Definition of a complaint
 - Accessibility and awareness
 - Complaint handling personnel
 - Complaint handling principles
 - Complaint stages
 - Putting things right
 - Continuous learning and improvement
 - Self-assessment and compliance
5. There are 43 mandatory requirements that apply to the Council. The Council is fully compliant with 41 requirements, and of the remaining two, this report and the publication of the Annual Report 2023 will provide full compliance with the code. Once the Annual Report is published, we will update the self-assessment on the Council’s website.

Next Steps

6. Officers will continue to pursue any outstanding best practice requirements. The self-assessment will be carried out in summer 2024 and the findings will be reported to this Panel.
7. The self-assessment 2023 will be updated once the Annual Report is published.

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Background Papers: None