

Public Document Pack



Meeting: EAP Connected Communities
Date: Wednesday 28th February, 2024
Time: 2:00pm
Venue: Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG

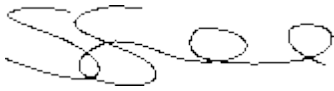
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<https://www.youtube.com/c/DemocraticServicesNorthNorthantsCouncil>

To members of the EAP Connected Communities

Councillors Lloyd Bunday (Chair), Valerie Anslow, Wendy Brackenbury, Bert Jackson, Ian Jelley, Richard Levell and Elliot Prentice

Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed on the agenda.

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07	Forward List of Items for the EAP 19 th April 2024 - Draft Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy		

08	Close of Meeting		
<p>Sanjit Sull, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer 8th February 2024</p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Committee Administrator: David Pope

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Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or **relates to** a financial interest of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

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Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Connected Communities

At 10.00 am on Friday 20th October, 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair)
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Bert Jackson

Councillor Ian Jelley
Councillor Elliot Prentice

Also in attendance – Councillor Lyn Buckingham

19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Valerie Anslow and Richard Levell. Apologies were also received from Adele Wylie and Janice Gotts.

20 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations received.

21 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2023

RESOLVED that:-

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22 Developing the Council's Approach to Communication

The Council's Assistant Chief Executive, Guy Holloway attended the meeting and provided a presentation with regard to the development of the Council's approach to communication.

The meeting heard that the Council was reviewing its approach to communications with an aim of developing a new Communications Strategy. It was noted that while there were positive aspects to the current approach, there remained areas for improvement.

The panel was provided with details of factors that guided the Council's approach to communication, noting that communication activity should mirror and enforce the Council's Corporate Plan. The values of the Council were highlighted, with the meeting noting that methods of communication should demonstrate these values.

The following aims were set out as being targets for achievement in terms of communications

- Informing residents, customers and other stakeholders of relevant information
- Explaining how to access services and detailing what was available
- Engagement with stakeholders in policy development and decision-making
- Provision of timely, relevant and accurate information
- Helping customers to help themselves
- Attracting the right attention to the area

The panel noted a number of constraints to achieving the targets set out above, including time and information overload, the digital divide, cultural and language barriers, misinformation and misunderstanding. Limited resources and the complexities of communication were also factors facing the Council.

The meeting was provided with details of the Council's customers and key stakeholders, who covered a wide range of individuals, organisations and sectors. It was noted that there was a need to engage with all of these stakeholders when developing policy and making decisions, while being mindful of the need to target stakeholder groups through a variety of communication mediums to allow for better coverage.

The panel heard that there was a vision to allow customers to access services 24/7 rather than just by visiting the Council offices in person or making contact by telephone. Early interventions and access to relevant advice first time could assist in stemming issues further down the line, with examples provided including debt advice and housing issues.

It was considered that members had a very important role in the Council's communication approach, not only with their constituents, but also in developing the Council's communication strategy.

The meeting heard that following unitarisation a corporate identity had to be formulated, with details of the brand guidelines detailed to the meeting that would allow all communications to be issued in a standard, cohesive manner. It was also noted that there was a variety of content issued by the Council in the form of press releases. In addition, there was a significant number of high-level conversations undertaken with local media services that was a positive route of circulating the Council's messages.

Reference was made to the Council's website, the panel noting that customers could undertake a wide range of business at a time that suited them, although it was heard that use of the website could also present challenges in access and navigation. The meeting heard that individuals could sign up for updates on specific areas of interest and there was a desire to develop that approach going forward.

Statistics were provided for the number of hits on the Council's website as well as engagement with the Council's social media accounts and reference was made to the Leader's updates. The panel also received details of the Council's newly installed soft phone system and the roll-out of this system across the Council.

Details were provided of current communication campaigns; Hi Street, aiming to boost and detail the local business offer available in the High Streets of local towns, the Council's Christmas campaign and the Big50 North Northamptonshire Vision. Details of positive feedback associated with each of these campaigns was presented to the panel.

Further details were provided of a revamp of the Your Voice Matters website that sought to push and increase engagement across a range of consultation processes, although consideration needed to be given as to how the message regarding these consultations could be more widely disseminated.

The panel heard that the following areas formed the future focus for the Council's communication:

- More planned activity adopting a more pro-active approach
- Targeted, prioritised approach
- Key campaigns with an annual programme
- Additional focus on: Demand management, prevention and early intervention, efficiency, economy & effectiveness
- Clear strategy and supporting policies and procedures
- Standardised and simplified approach
- Centralised capacity but with service champions
- Make efficient and effective use of traditional methods
- Make the most of digital channels and technology

Concluding the presentation, reference was made to the potential future use of Artificial Intelligence.

Councillors asked questions in relation to:

- Communicating and improving understanding of the responsibilities held by the unitary and town and parish councils
- How to utilise AI for the Council's benefit
- Digital literacy
- Accessing specific departments rapidly
- Accessibility of the Council website requiring improvement
- Elements of the telephony system requiring implementation
- Keeping the public updated on housing repairs and maintenance
- Management and access to the Council's CRM system
- The Council's intranet function

The Chair thanked the Assistant Chief Executive for his presentation.

23 Executive Forward Plan

The Executive Forward Plan for 1st October 2023 to 31st January 2024 was noted.

24 Forward List of Items for the EAP

The forward list of items for the EAP was considered.

25 Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 10.54 am



Connected Communities Executive Advisory Panel

16th February 2024

Report Title	Update to North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
Lead Member	Cllr Lloyd Bunday – Executive Member for Finance and Transformation
Report Author	Simon Mills – Assistant Director Customer Experience simon.mills@northnorthants.gov.uk

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)	Safe and thriving places

List of Appendices

Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Council Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek feedback on a proposed revision of the North Northamptonshire Council ‘Unacceptable or Unreasonable Communications and Behaviour policy’ ahead of presentation to Members of the Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The was drafted by Future Northants for implementation at vesting day. A review is now required to ensure the policy reflects North Northamptonshire

Council working practices and experiences and embodies the values of North Northamptonshire Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended the Executive Advisory Panel consider the revised policy and provide comment and feedback.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations –
 - The current policy confirming how the council will manage unacceptable behaviour was drafted under the Future Northants programme. It is recommended that policies are reviewed regularly to reflect the environment the authority operates in.
 - The Council has a responsibility to mitigate risk and ensure health, wellbeing and safety of staff and contractors and a robust policy should provide clarity on what behaviours are unacceptable and how those will be managed. The policy should also address persistent vexatious contacts, which put a strain on a services ability to deliver its statutory requirements and impact on other customers.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered: Do nothing and continue to operate under policy drafted by Future Northants and adopted at vesting day.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Council provides services to thousands of customers across a wide area and varying demographics. It is an unfortunate reality that incidents of what is considered unacceptable behaviour can occur and to mitigate it is both advisable and expected to have a policy which confirms what behaviours are not considered acceptable and how incidents will be managed.
- 4.2. A review on the current policy was undertaken by the Customer Services and Health, Safety & Wellbeing teams, in consultation with our recognised trade unions and service users.
- 4.3. The policy was reviewed alongside the internal staff alert register of recorded potential risk, and reported incidents of unacceptable behaviours to ensure a robust consideration of issues
- 4.4. The policy will inform the handling of difficult and contentious situations, ensuring that staff, contractors and customers understand the Council prioritises health, safety and wellbeing always

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The existing policy was drafted by Future Northants program and adopted for vesting day. It is now time to review and revise the council's policy to ensure it

best suits the needs of North Northamptonshire Council and is informed by experience and evolved working practice.

- 5.2. The proposed policy has been consulted on widely between internal services, colleagues and our recognised unions combining experience and knowledge to address the requirement of assuring safety of staff, contractors and customers and provide practical measures for managing unacceptable behaviour.
- 5.3. Key changes are format and specificity. It addresses the generality of the original policy, providing clarity around what is classed as unacceptable behaviour and how the council will manage those behaviours.
- 5.4. A choice to retain the current policy could undermine confidence of the staff that assurance of health, safety and wellbeing is a corporate priority.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. If approved, the draft policy will be communicated to colleagues and replace the current policy on the Council's website.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposal in this report.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The draft policy has been reviewed by the Council's Legal Team who has confirmed the right to restrict or dictate the method of service delivery should a customer's behaviour be deemed a health, safety or wellbeing risk for staff or contractors to the council and/or pose an exceptional strain on the council's ability to deliver services.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The policy supports our Corporate plan key commitments to provide safe and thriving places and connected communities allowing our staff and customers to carry out business with the assurance they are doing so in a safe environment with assurances of managed risks.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There are no risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report; the revised policy provides clarity for customers and staff and increases transparency around decision making.

7.4.2. The current policy does not provide sufficient clarity on what is unacceptable behaviour and how it should be managed and as such there is potential for risk if behaviours are not addressed robustly or timeously.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. Consultation for this policy was undertaken in conjunction with Health, Safety and Wellbeing, heads of services, staff and trade union representatives between Spring and Autumn 2022.

7.5.2. Engagement sessions enabled staff to have direct input and provide feedback which was incorporated into the final draft.

7.5.3. Consultation ensured the policy was informed by and reflects staff experience and opinion.

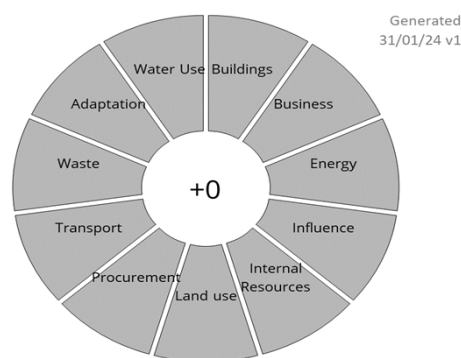
7.5.4. Consultation has ensured the policy provides clarity to our staff and customers on what is unacceptable and provides our managers with practical means

7.6. Equality Implications

7.6.1. Equality Screening Assessment completed confirms no impact to protected groups. ESA sign off pending.

7.7. Climate Impact

1.1.1. The assessment completed, zero impact. The contents of the policy revision have no direct positive or negative dependencies on NNC's climate response.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 11 mos away.

7.9.2 The infographic shows the relative costs and benefits of the decision on 11 different categories with respect to the climate: Buildings, no effect. Business, no effect. Energy, no effect. Influence, no effect. Internal Resources, no effect. Land use, no effect. Procurement, no effect. Transport, no effect. Waste, no effect. Adaptation, no effect. Water Use, no effect.

7.8. **Community Impact**

7.8.1. No community impact.

7.9. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.9.1. Management of unacceptable behaviour could positively impact crime and disorder reducing requirement to access emergency services with practical methods of managing unacceptable behaviours which should provide a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1. Current policy – [Unacceptable or unreasonable communications and behaviour policy](#)

8.2. Equality Screening Assessment

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Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy

Effective from **XXXX**

www.northnorthants.gov.uk

Document Version Control

Author: Customer Services

Type of document: Corporate Policy and Procedure

Version Number: .07

Document File Name: Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy

Issue date: **XXXX**

Approval date and by who: **XXXX**

Document held by: **XXXX**

For internal or external publication: **XXXX**

Document stored on Council website or Intranet: **XXXX**

Next review date: **XXXX**

Change History

Issue	Date	Comments

NB: Draft versions .07 – final published versions 1.0 +

Consultees

Internal	External

Distribution List

Internal	External

Links to other documents

Document	Link

1. Introduction

The council helps thousands of customers every year and welcomes customers' comments and suggestions; they are key in helping the council develop and improve the services it provides. The council's service provision will be guided by its values:

- Customer-focused
- Respectful
- Efficient
- Supportive
- Trustworthy

The council recognises that in times of distress, customers accessing services may act out of character. The council is committed to dealing with customers fairly, impartially and empathetically. Occasionally some customers may behave in a manner that is unacceptable or unreasonable. Threatening, bullying, discriminatory or abusive behaviours are not acceptable and may require customer contact to be managed or stopped to protect our officers, councillors, contractors and others providing services on the council's behalf. Similarly, contacts of excessive frequency, repetition, duration or content which unreasonably hinder the council's ability to deliver services may require managing.

1.2 Scope

North Northamptonshire Council's customers are the people who contact the council and use our services and who are affected by the work we do.

The council will make every effort to ensure that services remain accessible to all customers. This policy identifies customer behaviours which are unacceptable and sets out actions that the council will take to manage those behaviours in order to protect staff, councillors, contractors and others providing services on the council's behalf and to ensure council business is not impeded.

This policy does not supersede policies in place for specific areas of the council or for agencies operating on behalf of the council.

2. Behaviours assessed as unacceptable

2.1 Abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour

Persons providing council services have the right not to suffer abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour even when a customer is distressed. Some examples (not an exhaustive list) of behaviours assessed as being unacceptable include:

- Abusive, foul or offensive language
- Name calling
- Shouting
- Remarks of a sexual nature
- Racist language
- Misogynistic language
- Discriminatory remarks due to sexuality or trans gender status
- Offensive gestures
- Verbal or physical threats
- Physical violence such as punching, kicking, spitting
- Attempted physical violence
- Bullying or intimidating behaviour
- Using, brandishing or throwing weapons or other objects with the intention of inflicting physical or psychological harm
- Using or threatening to use an animal to inflict physical or psychological harm; this includes failure to control an animal from inflicting harm
- Harassment, including stalking
- Publishing unacceptable information on social media, websites, newspapers, etc.

2.2 Unreasonable and unacceptable demands on services

Expectations from a customer may be viewed as unreasonable or the level of demand from a customer may be deemed unacceptable. This could include the number of contacts made in relation to an issue or issues. In some cases, this may be unintentional and what is deemed to be unacceptable will depend on individual circumstances surrounding the behaviour or issue. The council may view these types of behaviours to be unacceptable if they impact significantly on workloads or the capacity to deliver services by taking up excessive amounts of time, thus disadvantaging other customers. Some examples of unreasonable or unacceptable demands may include:

- Demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale

- Insistence on dealing with a specific member of staff
- Same or similar requests to several members of staff
- Refusal to end a telephone call or insistence on speaking with a person who is unavailable or not the appropriate person for example, the Chief Executive
- Requiring responses to malicious correspondence

2.3 Unacceptable persistent contact

Where persistent contact becomes unreasonable, or if communications become forceful or unreasonably demanding, persistence may be considered harassment.

Some examples of unacceptable persistent contact may include:

- excessive contact and/or communications beyond requirements
- refusal to accept a decision where due process has been completed
- refusal to follow the explained process to pursue an issue or concern
- continuing contact about the same issue(s) without presenting new information
- using other names to continue to try to access officers or councillors about the same issues

2.4 Unacceptable public expression of views or acts of civil disobedience while on council premises

The council is committed to delivering excellent services to all its customers and this includes ensuring that our environment is safe and welcoming which requires cooperation from visitors. Customers should be able to express their views and opinions in a lawful manner without resort to unacceptable behaviours or actions that affect employees, councillors or other visitors. The council will take necessary action to remove from its property and prevent a person from entering its property if the following types of unacceptable behaviours of these types are used

- Use of intimidating, threatening, discriminatory or foul language towards staff, councillors, volunteers, customers or visitors
- Harassment or bullying of staff, councillors, volunteers, customers or visitors
- Disorderly conduct such as causing disturbances, shouting or any other type of activity which prevents or hinders day to day business of the council
- Congregating in the building or blocking access points and thoroughfares and preventing and hindering day to day business of the council
- Entering or attempting to enter non public areas of its building
- Recording or photographing people without giving appropriate notice
- Damaging, defacing or otherwise spoiling council property
- Failure to leave the premises when instructed to do so by council employees

• 3. How unacceptable behaviour will be managed

3.1 Face to face contact

If a customer presents unacceptable behaviour during a face to face contact the person dealing with the customer has the right to ask them to stop and the right to ask them to leave the premises if the unacceptable behaviour continues.

Customers may be asked to leave if they do not adequately supervise children or other adults accompanying them, where the behaviour of the children or other adults results in damage to council premises, disruption to council business or adversely affects other visitors. Customers may be asked to leave if they bring animals, other than those who guide or assist, into council premises.

Following an initial incident of unacceptable behaviour, a warning notice may be issued to the customer explaining why the behaviour caused concern and what sanction the council may make if the behaviour is presented again. The Assistant Director or a delegated senior manager of the service will be responsible for the issuance of the warning notice and notification to the customer. Notification will usually be given in writing.

If a behaviour is so extreme it poses an immediate threat, the council will report the matter to the police and may apply sanction immediately.

3.2 Telephone contact

If a customer presents unacceptable behaviour during a telephone contact the person dealing with the customer has the right to ask them to stop and will advise the customer that the call will be ended if the unacceptable behaviour continues. The person dealing with the customer has the right to terminate the telephone contact if the unacceptable behaviour continues and will do so in a polite way.

There may be occasions where the person dealing with the customer is unable to interrupt the conversation to give a warning about the behaviour and in these cases the person dealing with the contact has the right to end the call immediately.

Following an initial incident of unacceptable behaviour, a warning notice may be issued to the customer explaining why the behaviour caused concern and what sanction the council may make if the behaviour is presented again. The Assistant Director or a delegated senior manager of the service will be responsible for the issuance of the warning notice and notification to the customer. Notification will usually be given in writing.

If a behaviour is so extreme it poses an immediate threat, the council will report the matter to the police and may apply sanction immediately.

3.3 Written correspondence, including e-mails

If correspondence received by the council expresses unacceptable behaviour the council has the right to refuse to process it. The council will advise the customer that their correspondence is not acceptable and will ask them to stop the behaviour or the council will cease to respond to communications. If the behaviour is not stopped the council will not respond to further communications and may take further action.

Following an initial incident of unacceptable behaviour, a warning notice may be issued to the customer explaining why the behaviour caused concern and what sanction the council may make if the behaviour is presented again. The Assistant Director or a delegated senior manager of the service will be responsible for the issuance of the warning notice and notification to the customer. Notification will usually be given in writing.

If a behaviour is so extreme it poses an immediate threat, the council will report the matter to the police and may apply sanction immediately.

4. Managing persistent unacceptable behaviour

4.1 When sanction will be applied

If there are further demonstrations of unacceptable behaviour within a 12-month period of a warning notice being issued to a customer, the council may impose sanction for customer. This applies even where the behaviour occurs whilst accessing a different service from the one which issued the original warning notice.

4.2 Types of Sanction that may be applied

1	Contact restricted to a specific format
2	Contact restricted to a specific date and time
3	Contact restricted to an appropriate named person only
4	Contact restricted to a specified time limit
5	Contact restricted to being made via a designated third party
6	Contact disregarded if it raises no new issues
7	Contact blocked or redirected
8	Customer barred from entering council premises

4.3 Determining sanction types and period

The Assistant Director or a delegated senior manager of the service applying sanction will determine the types and period and notify this to the customer. Notification will

usually be given in writing. A combination of sanction may be applied where required. The period shall be proportionate to the nature of the unacceptable behaviour.

Further demonstrations of unacceptable behaviour within the period may attract further sanctions to be determined by the Assistant Director or delegated senior manager of the affected service(s). The Assistant director or delegated senior manager of the service will determine whether the subsequent sanctions will run concurrently or consecutively to the original. The decision will be proportionate to the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the history of previous sanctions. The Assistant Director or delegated senior manager of the service will notify the customer of the type of sanction applied and the period.

If a person's unacceptable behaviour with one service leads to issue of warning or sanction, this could affect access to other services the council provides.

Connected Communities Executive Advisory Panel

16th February 2024

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Complaints Remedy Policy
Lead Member	Cllr Lloyd Bunday – Executive Member for Finance and Transformation
Report Author	Simon Mills – Assistant Director Customer Experience simon.mills@northnorthants.gov.uk

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)	Modern public services

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft North Northamptonshire Complaints Remedy Policy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek comments and feedback in relation to the North Northamptonshire Council Complaints Remedy Policy, which was designed to support services in assessing complaints at stage one, stage two and Ombudsman scale points.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. North Northamptonshire Council Complaints Handling Policy confirms that complainants have statutory rights when raising a dispute around loss of service or maladministration. The Complaints Remedy Policy will enable services to make more consistent decisions informed by Ombudsman guidance as to how best to address injustice arising from maladministration or loss of service arising from fault of the Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Connected Communities EAP consider the draft North Northamptonshire Complaints Remedy Policy and provide feedback prior to submission of the policy to Executive for approval at its meeting on 14th March 2024.
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations: To ensure that the Executive Advisory the council has in place a policy reflecting best practice to advise and inform decision making on remedying complaints.
- 3.3 Alternative Option Considered: Adopt no policy and instead decision making continues to be informed on a case-by-case basis with no defined corporate response and the potential for contradictory decision making.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. Complainants have a statutory right to escalate a complaint to the appropriate Ombudsman Service should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the response to the complaint. This is confirmed in the Council's Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy.
- 4.2. The Ombudsman Services have an expectation that when things have gone wrong resulting in injustice, the Council will put things right (remedy) without delay and where the Council does not do that, it is at risk of the Ombudsman Services upholding complaints against them, making its own recommendations and publicly highlighting the failure.
- 4.3. The Council currently has no policy to guide the offering of remedy for injustice arising from maladministration or loss of service, and as a result decision making in this area lacks prescription and clarity and is administered on a case-by-case basis giving rise to the potential for contradictory decision making.
- 4.4. This proposal is to introduce a new policy to inform decision which confirms the Council's approach to remedy.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. A decision to offer remedy should be informed by guidance and outcomes of the Ombudsman Services as well as the values of North Northamptonshire Council.
- 5.2. A policy would confirm such circumstances where it would be appropriate to offer remedy and what form a remedy could take.
- 5.3. The current arrangements are inefficient, resulting in both delay and inconsistency in decision making and will likely result in continued customer dissatisfaction with complaint outcomes.

- 5.4. A choice to not adopt a policy could result in poor reputation should the lack of policy be highlighted by an Ombudsman Service.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Feedback from this meeting will be factored into the final draft policy submitted to the Executive for approval at its meeting on 14th March 2024.
- 6.2. If approved, this policy will be published internally to inform decision making.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. Financial implications arising from remedy could decrease if the Council introduces this policy. Ombudsman Services have the option to award or increase remedy offers where the Council has failed to follow good practice guidance. The policy has the potential to add efficiencies and reduce delay and increase satisfaction in outcomes reducing escalation to Ombudsman Services.
- 7.1.2. This decision has implications for transforming complaint handling by all services. A policy framework will speed up decision making and increase accuracy of decision-making providing efficiencies in the process and increasing customer satisfaction.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. This report and policy has been reviewed and approved for submission by Legal services.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The proposed policy supports our Corporate Plan key commitment to provide modern and efficient services by providing a framework to level up decision making in line with best practice and will result in increased customer satisfaction.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. Failing to adopt a policy could result in risk to reputation. There is an expectation that the Council maintains a policy to inform decision making on this matter. Continuing to operate without a policy framework will increase the potential for erroneous decision making, failures in addressing injustice and increase the risk of reputational damage resulting in Ombudsman Services publicly highlighting failures.

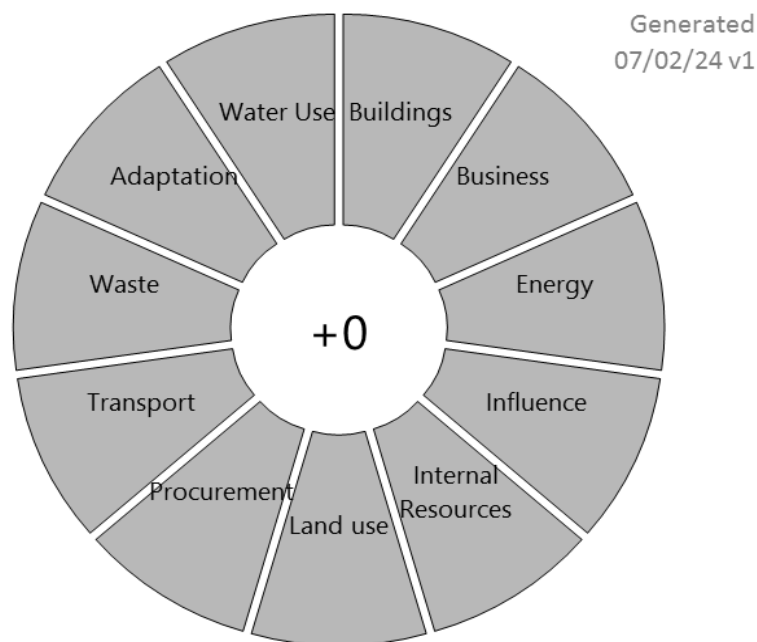
7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. Internal consultation with interested parties – stakeholder services engaged and feedback incorporated to ensure clarity.

7.6. Equality Implications

7.6.1. An Equality Screening Assessment has been completed.

7.7. Climate Impact



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 10 mos away.

7.7.1 The infographic shows the relative costs and benefits of the decision on 11 different categories with respect to the climate as a result of this policy adoption: Buildings, no effect. Business, no effect. Energy, no effect. Influence, no effect. Internal Resources, no effect. Land use, no effect. Procurement, no effect. Transport, no effect. Waste, no effect. Adaptation, no effect. Water Use, no effect

7.8. Community Impact

7.8.1. No community impact

7.9. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.9.1. There are no crime and disorder impacts from this policy.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Equality Screening Assessment

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Complaint Remedy Policy

www.northnorthants.gov.uk

Document Version Control

Author: Customer Delivery Manager Amanda Davis

Type of document: **Draft**

Version Number: **.03.2**

Document File Name: Remedy Policy

Issue date: **XXXX**

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Document stored on Council website or Intranet: Intranet

Next review date: **XXXX**

Change History

Issue	Date	Comments

Consultees

Internal	External
services	e.g. Stakeholders / Partners /Organisation(s)

Distribution List

Internal	External
e.g. Individual(s) / Group / Section	e.g. Stakeholders / Partners /Organisation(s)

Links to other documents

Document	Link
NNC Compliments, comments and complaints Policy	https://cms.northnorthants.gov.uk/media/374/download
LGSCO Remedies Guidance	Guidance on remedies - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
HOS Remedies Guidance	Policy and Guidance on remedies - Housing Ombudsman (housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
s92 Local Government Act 2000	s92 Local Government Act 2000
Housing Act 1996	Schedule 2 Housing Act 1996

Additional Comments to note

Make any additional comments as might be relevant here

Contents

Section	Page
1.0 Introduction/foreword	1.0 Introduction
2.0 Scope	2.0 Scope
3.0 Policy outcomes	3.0 Policy outcomes
4.0 Name of strategy/policy	4.0 Remedy Policy
5.0 Next steps	5.0 Next steps
6.0 Glossary of terms	6.0 Glossary of terms
Appendix A	Financial Remedy Consideration form
Appendix B	Financial Remedy Offer form

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The council helps thousands of residents every year and welcomes customers' comments and suggestions; they are key in helping the council develop and improve the services it offers. In the carrying out of all functions the council will always seek to be guided by its values:

- Customer-focused
- Respectful
- Efficient
- Supportive
- Trustworthy

Sometimes things go wrong and organisational learning can be drawn and processes developed to stop the same mistakes happening again. Where someone has suffered an injustice because things have gone wrong, it must be acknowledged, and steps taken to put things right. Not all maladministration or poor service results in injustice or hardship, but where it does, steps should be taken to restore the complainant to the position they would have been in if the maladministration or poor service had not occurred. If that is not possible a remedy would be appropriate.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to remedies offered in resolution of complaints raised under the North Northamptonshire Council Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

2.2 This policy does not apply to claims for personal injuries, damage or insurance. This policy does not apply to mandatory payments made under statutory policy.

3.0 Policy outcomes

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles, guide decision making, actions and requirements on the administration of remedy. This policy's aim is to ensure a financially robust corporate response that is also fair and proportionate where it is not possible to restore a person to the position they would have been in had a service failure not occurred.

This policy will identify:

- the circumstances to which remedy may apply and the methods available

- required authorisation levels to ensure maintenance of robust internal financial controls
- monitoring responsibilities to ensure performance awareness supports outcome achievement

4.0 Remedy Policy

4.1 Responsibility for the Policy

- The Remedy Policy will be owned and maintained by the Section 106 Monitoring Officer in collaboration with s151 Finance Officer and in consultation with the appropriate business areas.
- Directors are responsible for ensuring appropriate records are maintained and linked processes are followed:
 - ❖ Remedy decisions and their authorisation chain
 - ❖ Learning outcomes and the service improvements those outcomes informed
 - ❖ Return of records to the council's designated complaint coordination and Ombudsman Services link

4.2 Remedy Principals

The council will ensure responses to injustice arising from maladministration or poor service demonstrate its values in action. A response will

- Acknowledge and apologise for poor service, maladministration or injustice where identified and if possible, return the complainant and any others affected in the same way to the position they would have been in if it had not occurred.
- Be sensitive to the customer's individual circumstances and consider a remedy which takes those into account while managing their expectations in a professional manner.
- Be open about how remedy decisions are reached and keep clear and accurate records of remedies offered including authorisation in line with directorate's delegated authority.
- Ensure remedy decisions are proportionate to the injustice and treat people without bias, discrimination or unlawfulness.
- Record and use lessons learnt to improve services ensuring maladministration or poor service is addressed and not repeated.

4.3 Remedy Decisions

The complainant should be offered a remedy that returns them to the position they would have been in should the maladministration or poor service leading to injustice or hardship not occurred.

If that is not possible, the remedy should compensate for the injustice or hardship appropriately and should also be offered to others who have suffered injustice or hardship as a result of the same maladministration or poor service.

Wherever an injustice has occurred the complainant must receive both an assurance that lessons have been learnt an explanation of changes made to prevent maladministration or poor service being repeated.

Remedy decisions should be based on the specific and individual circumstances for which they are compensating, and consideration should be given to the appropriateness of non-financial and financial remedy.

Non-financial remedies

- an apology, explanation, and acknowledgement of responsibility given in the matter suitable to the needs of the customer ie: written; telephone or face to face format.
- remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant; revising published material; revising procedures to prevent the same thing happening again; training or supervising staff; or any combination of these.

Financial remedies

Financial compensation for direct or indirect financial loss, loss of opportunity, inconvenience, distress, or any combination of these must have regard to remedy guidance offered by the appropriate Ombudsman Service and internal procedure.

- compensation for financial loss must have regard to how much the complainant has demonstrably lost or what extra costs they have incurred.
- financial compensation for inconvenience or distress should consider the impact on the individual, for example:
 - ❖ the circumstances contributed to ill health
 - ❖ the circumstances lead to prolonged or aggravated injustice or hardship
 - ❖ the length of time taken to resolve a dispute or complaint
 - ❖ the trouble the individual was put to in pursuing the dispute or complaint.
 - ❖ costs that the complainant incurred in pursuing the complaint
 - ❖ any inconvenience, distress or both resulting from poor complaint handling

4.4 Financial Remedy

Financial Remedies will be benchmarked against the relevant Ombudsman Services remedy guidance.

- Financial remedy offers require supporting documentation to include 'Financial Remedy Consideration' form (**appendix A**). This form must be appropriately authorised.
- Decision maker will use the Financial Remedy Offer form (**appendix B**).
- Designated Complaints handler to raise a payment against cost centre provided on Financial Remedy Consideration form.
- Management of the cost centre remains responsibility of service offering remedy.

5.0 Next steps

5.1 It is false economy and poor administrative practice to deal with complaints only as they arise and to fail to correct the cause of the problem. Learning from complaints, and offering timely and effective remedies, gives the best outcome in terms of cost effectiveness and customer service – benefiting the service provider, the complainant and the taxpayer. The council will utilise learning from complaints to improve services and seek to demonstrate the improvements.

5.2 Services to be supported to develop internal processes in response to the policy.

5.3 This policy will be reviewed bi-annually commencing 2 years from publish date.

6.0 Glossary of terms

Use this section to give definitions to any words that require explanation – especially if this is a public document. If you can't avoid jargon or technical terms, this is the place to explain them.

Term	Definition
Remedy	Putting right injustice arising from maladministration or poor service

7.0 Appendix



Appendix A to NNC
Remedy Policy Finan

Appendix A



Appendix B to NNC
Remedy Policy Finan

Appendix B



North
Northamptonshire
Council

North Northamptonshire Council

1 FEBRUARY 2024 TO 31 MAY 2024

Published by: Democratic Services

Leader of North Northamptonshire Council: Councillor Jason Smithers

INTRODUCTION

This is the North Northamptonshire Council's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days' notice of the Council's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and "exempt decisions" which the Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four-month period. The Plan is updated on a rolling monthly basis.

The Members of the Executive are:	
Councillor Jason Smithers	Leader of North Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Helen Howell	Deputy Leader of North Northamptonshire Council Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
VACANT	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Scott Edwards	Children, Families, Education and Skills
Councillor Harriet Pentland	Climate and Green Environment
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Finance and Transformation
Councillor David Brackenbury	Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Matt Binley	Highways, Travel and Assets
Councillor Mark Rowley	Housing, Communities and Levelling-Up
Councillor David Howes	Rural Communities and Localism

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will normally be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Council's Monitoring Officer considers that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The authority has decided that a Key Decision is one which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the authority incurring expenditure of which is, or the making of savings which are, significant; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the authority."

The Council has decided that significant expenditure or savings are those amounting to above £500,000.

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes North Northamptonshire Council will also have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

At times it may be necessary for the North Northamptonshire Council to give consideration to items where the public may be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Council's [Constitution](#). This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Paragraph 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 provides for members of the public to make representations to the Council on why an exempt item should be considered in public, rather than in private. Persons wishing to make such representations and/or obtain further details in respect of any issues referred to in the Plan should contact the undermentioned officer.

The Monitoring Officer may also include in the Forward Plan references to such other decisions, which are to be taken by the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committee or officers as they consider appropriate. These will be those decisions that are considered to be significant or sufficiently important and/or sensitive so that it is reasonable for a member of the public to expect it to be recorded and published.

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with David Pope, Democratic Services.

Please email: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

February 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
General Fund Final Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan Page 38	To recommend to Council the General Fund Final Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan	Executive	Yes	No		8 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme 2024-2028	To recommend for approval to Council the Capital Programme 2024-2028.	Executive	Yes	No		8 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Final Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan	To recommended for approval to Council the HRA Final Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term	Executive	Yes	No		8 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive

	Financial Plan.						Director - Finance & Performance
Budget Forecast Update 2023-24 - Period 9	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023/24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Outturn Report 2023/24 at P9	To report on the Capital Budget on a quarterly basis	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Options Appraisal for Recommissioning Public Health Services	To consider in-house or external provision of: • 0-19 Health	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing

	Visiting and school nursing service • NISHH- Northamptonshire Integrated Sexual Health Service and HIV service • Strong Start Service • REACH Young People's Counselling Service • Oral Health Service						Director of Public Health
Determination of admission arrangements for local authority maintained (community and voluntary controlled) schools in North Northamptonshire for the 2025 intakes.	Executive is asked to determine admission arrangements of schools where the local authority is the admission authority.	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Children, Families, Education and Skills Executive Director - Children's Services
Department for Transport Funding Allocations	To note the allocation of capital funding by the Department for Transport for 2024/25 and to agree how the funding should be	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy

	spent.						
Communities Strategy	To approve the Communities Strategy	Executive	Yes	No	VCSE North Northants networks	15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Housing, Communities and Levelling Up Director of Public Health
Surplus Asset Disposal	To approval the disposal of specific assets	Executive	Yes	Part exempt		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
Corby Business Academy SEND Provision	To consider and approve the capital project for Corby Business Academy SEND Provision	Executive	Yes	No		15 th February 2024	Executive Member - Children, Families, Education and Skills Executive Director - Children's Services

March 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Budget Forecast Update 2023-24 - Period 10 Page 42	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023/24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Disposal of Land off Rothwell Road, South Desborough	To approve disposal of the land	Executive	Yes	Yes – paragraph 3	Public notification carried out under s.123(2A) of the Local	14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive

					Government Act 1972		Director - Place and Economy
Annual Inflationary Uplifts Contracted Adult Social Care Providers	To approve the annual uplifts	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing Executive Director - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS)
Asset Acquisition Policy Page 43	To consider adopting an NNC policy.	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
Kettering Leisure Village Business Case	To consider and approve the proposed Business Case regarding the future of KLV	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Deputy Leader & Sports, Leisure, Culture and Tourism Director of Public Health
Post 16 Policy for Home to school transport	Approval of policy document	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel

							and Assets Executive Director - Place and Economy
Adult Social Care (ASC) Strategic Framework	To approve the framework	Executive	Yes	No	No formal but informal within NNC and with appropriate partners.	14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Adults, Health and Wellbeing Assistant Director Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services
Children's Services Case Management System (CapitaOne) Contract Extension	To approve the contract extension	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Children, Families, Education and Skills Executive Director - Children's Services
Workspace Transformation & Stock Condition Capital Investment	Request to move £3.25m from the Capital Development Pool to the Capital Programme to allow works to be	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Highways, Travel and Assets Executive Director - Place

	delivered to improve NNC's office accommodation and to undertake improvements to some of the council's properties as identified in recent stock condition surveys						and Economy
North Northamptonshire Street Naming & Numbering Policy Page 45	This is a new policy that combines and updates the policies/guidance of the previous four sovereign authorities	Executive	Yes	No		14 th March 2024	Executive Member - Growth and Regeneration Executive Director - Place and Economy

April 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Budget Forecast 2023-24 - Period 11 Page 46	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023-24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Council-Owned Company Governance Arrangements	To approve governance arrangements relating to Council-owned companies	Executive	Yes	No		18 th April 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive

							Director - Finance & Performance
<p>NNC Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028</p> <p>Page 47</p>	To seek the Executive's approval to adopt the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy following statutory consultation and subsequent amendments	Executive	Yes	No	Initial consultation event 21/9/22 attended by approx. 120 stakeholders. Feedback utilised to develop the draft strategy. The draft document will undergo a 6-week formal statutory consultation and additional proactive consultation with service users is planned	18 th April 2024	<p>Executive Member - Housing, Communities and Levelling Up</p> <p>Assistant Director Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services</p>

May 2024

Subject of the Decision:	Purpose of Report	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author and Executive Lead Member
Budget Forecast 2023-24 - Period 12 Page 48	To report any adjustments to the in-year budget	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Programme Update 2023-24	To report any adjustments to the in-year programme	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation Executive Director - Finance & Performance
Capital Outturn Report 2023/24 at Period 12	To report on the Capital Budget on a quarterly basis	Executive	Yes	No		16 th May 2024	Executive Member - Finance and Transformation

							Executive Director - Finance & Performance
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