

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 28 MARCH 2001

REPORTING OF COMPLAINTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Further to minute 4 of the meeting of 18 September 2000, this report suggests a reporting procedure to deal with complaints to the Ombudsman and those made via the Council's complaints procedure.

2 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED POLICY

Members will recall that at the meeting of the Standards Committee on 18 September 2000 there was a discussion with regard to the reporting of complaints to the Ombudsman.

The terms of reference for the Standards Committee includes the corporate complaints system and monitoring of Ombudsman complaints.

There are two different types of complaints with which the Council is concerned - Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman and those made via the Council's own complaints procedure.

Complaints to the Ombudsman will only be investigated once the issues have been addressed by the Council, usually via its own complaints system, or if no response has been given in a reasonable time.

The Ombudsman will also only investigate complaints if a significant injustice has resulted from maladministration, eg: a service or benefit not received or a delay incurred, a financial loss or distress or upset was caused.

The Council's complaints procedure covers "all expressions of dissatisfaction with a service provided or in relation to a service previously requested".

Previously Ombudsman complaints were only reported to Committee if maladministration was found. However, an analysis of all complaints under the Council's own complaints procedure was reported to the appropriate Service Committee on a six monthly basis during the June/July and November/December cycles to identify causes of complaints and corrective action required.

In order for Members to obtain an overview of the situation, it is suggested that all Ombudsman reports, whether or not maladministration has been found, and all Council complaints should be reported to Select Committees on a service by service basis. This will include an analysis of the complaints and identify any corrective action required.

The Standards Committee will receive a report on all complaints which relate to standards or impropriety and an annual summary of all other complaints considered by Select Committees.

3 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's complaints procedure is dealt with by existing staff and resources.

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Complaints can be made by all sections of the community in person, in writing or by telephone to any Council employee. From June, the facility will also be available on the Council's web site to complain officially or comment about Council services.

5 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising out of this report in terms of LA21, Community Safety, Human Rights or Planning Implications.

6 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

8 RECOMMENDATION

The views of the Committee are requested.

STEVE MADDOX
CHIEF EXECUTIVE