

Audit & Governance Committee – Recommendations Tracker

5 June 2024

Number	Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation / Action	Action by whom	Action update	Target date for Completion
2023						
A7/23	5 June 2023	Annual Complaints Performance Report	<p>The Customer Relations Manager, the Head of Customer Engagement and System Development and the Director of Law and Governance will take Committee member's comments and suggestions away and will report back at November's meeting where the LGSC Annual Letter and Complaints Update, and Council Complaints – Half Yearly Update items are scheduled; areas to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) comparative complaints figures with other local authorities. b) whether a similar internal investigator appointment will be beneficial for ASC and having more internal investigator roles in Education Services. c) consider whether the Corporate category can be renamed to 'Other' and explore whether it can be broken down by the services they related to as soon as possible; to liaise with Committee members on the services to be listed. d) consider how non-formal complaints information such as around highways that residents direct to Members, can be incorporated in future reports or provided to the Committee in another form. e) explore the suggestion with database providers of a response box being 	Customer Relations Manager / Head of Customer Engagement and System Development / Director of Law and Governance	<p>The Customer Relations Team Manager on 15 May 2024 has noted that questions b), c), e), f), i) were answered as part of the previous update on 3 November 2023 in the Recommendations Tracker or are included in the Annual Complaints Performance Report – June 2024.</p> <p>Questions a), d), g), h) were responded to as part of the previous update on 3 November 2023, and are referred to in the briefing document (A33/23 - Appendix 1) that provides the update on the Complaints Task and Finish Group:</p> <p><i>The recommendations and questions put forward by Audit & Governance Committee Members (as detailed below - Action A7/23), will be included in the forward work plan for the Senior Complaints Practice Lead, and have been shared with the Customer Transformation Programme for consideration as part of their work to streamline processes, make better use of technology and improve the information we provide.</i></p> <p>As of 14 February 2024, the Customer Relations Team Manager and the team provided the following update:</p>	June 2024

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Page 14			<p>added to formal complaints indicating the residents' borough or district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) provide a report on the customer services steering group, identifying the problems, where those were occurring and what was being done. g) provide an update on the Customer and Communities Directorate's mapping exercise of the Council's communication touch points and whether those were user friendly. h) consider a similar approach of having a central email address for residents when communicating with the Council around reporting a defect or complaint and issues to be allocated to the relevant officers for a response within an agreed timeline. i) provide an update on dovetailing residents' formal complaints with concerns raised to Members if they were about the same issue, as well as where concerns should be referred to the formal complaints process. 		<p>The ongoing Customer Service Transformation Programme has remained the focus for the Service. Officers remain committed to addressing the questions from the Committee; at this time the update is such that a significant amount of the focus on Customer Service Transformation includes the areas highlighted by committee and as such they remain a work in progress.</p> <p>Update provided by the Customer Relations Manager on 3 November 2023:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a) Comparative complaints figures with other local authorities.</p> <p>We are continuing to gather data from comparable authorities. Challenges include that data captured is different and does not lend itself to direct comparisons. So far only three authorities have responded to the data sharing request.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">b) Whether a similar internal investigator appointment will be beneficial for ASC and having more internal investigator roles in Education Services.</p> <p>The ASC complaint procedure is a single tier process. The expectation is that the service complained about is best placed to respond in detail; essentially taking forward their own investigation. Complaints are responded to by Managers / Senior Managers who have a background in Social</p>
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Page 15					<p>Work and therefore completely understand the complexity of the complaint and if the Council have adhered to its duties under the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>Staffing resources in Customer Relations for Education Services have increased to allow better triaging and quality assurance of complaints as well as enquiry handling. 4 complaint leads have also been appointed within the SEND Service who are working closely with the Customer Relations Team to improve the quality and timeliness of initial responses which in turn will decrease the volumes of complaints escalating through the process.</p> <p>c) Consider whether the Corporate category can be renamed to ‘Other’ and explore whether it can be broken down by the services they related to as soon as possible; to liaise with Committee members on the services to be listed.</p> <p>The update report recognises the request and refers Services other than social care and education rather than Corporate Services. The weekly complaint snapshot reports shared with the CEO and Leader of the Council provide the Service breakdown suggested. Proposal that A&G Committee Chair and Vice Chair are included in the circulation of the weekly reports going forward.</p>	
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Page 16					<p>d) Consider how non-formal complaints information such as around highways that residents direct to Members, can be incorporated in future reports or provided to the Committee in another form.</p> <p>This proposal continues to be considered; challenges include that the way these enquiries are captured and recorded is not currently uniform within the three Customer Relations Teams.</p> <p>e) Explore the suggestion with database providers of a response box being added to formal complaints indicating the residents' borough or district.</p> <p>The request has been shared with the provider who are exploring the most appropriate way to take this forward. Challenges include restrictions due to GDPR which means that providing the information cannot be compulsory and therefore the data may not be complete.</p> <p>f) Provide a report on the customer services steering group, identifying the problems, where those were occurring and what was being done.</p> <p>In Education Services the steering group continues to focus on improving the quality and timeliness of responses whilst</p>	
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Page 17					<p>identifying the root causes of complaints. Perceived poor standards of communication and delays in the Education Health Care Plan process continue to be the primary cause of complaints. Education Services continue to work to address this given the acknowledged national challenges in securing assessments and outcome reports by Education Psychologists.</p> <p>g) Provide an update on the Customer and Communities Directorate’s mapping exercise of the Council’s communication touch points and whether those were user friendly.</p> <p>h) Consider a similar approach of having a central email address for residents when communicating with the Council around reporting a defect or complaint and issues to be allocated to the relevant officers for a response within an agreed timeline.</p> <p>The above (g and h) continue to be explored as challenges include the fact that the timescales for responses for two of the complaint procedures (Adults and Childrens Services) are governed by statutory legislation and cannot be deviated upon. The introduction of the online self service complaint portal addresses the central point to register a complaint. As the three customer relations teams are located separately within the Council a central or</p>	
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Page 18					<p>single email address at present needs to be explored in more detail due to the administrative element of recognising the specific nature of the complaint and which service is best able to respond.</p> <p>i) Provide an update on dovetailing residents' formal complaints with concerns raised to Members if they were about the same issue, as well as where concerns should be referred to the formal complaints process.</p> <p>The CFLL Customer Relations Team has recruited an officer to a new role that focuses on building relationships with members and services. The role remit includes working with the services and members to decrease the volume of duplicated effort in providing both a response for the Member to share with the family or their representative MP and a formal stage 1 complaint response direct to the family.</p>	
A8/23	12 July 2023	Counter Fraud Annual Report 2022/23	The Audit Manager – Counter Fraud will find out whether a check had been undertaken across all schools in Surrey to make sure that all the business managers were on the right salary level.	Audit Manager – Counter Fraud	<p>Update provided by the Audit Manager (Counter Fraud) on 10 May 2024:</p> <p>The action is ongoing, it is hoped that progress will be made as business as usual (BAU) is nearing.</p> <p>Update provided by the Audit Manager (Counter Fraud) on 22 January 2024:</p> <p>We will update the Committee at the November meeting of the results of the data</p>	November 2024

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Page 19					<p>matching on school business managers grades. We plan to complete this exercise in Unit4 in September.</p> <p>(Update provided by the Audit Manager (Counter Fraud) on 2 January 2024:</p> <p>Supporting papers for school staff are held locally, confirmation of SBM paypoints would not be possible without writing out to all schools; the team did perform analysis on payroll records for schools. This included stratified sampling and review of high earners to identify anomalies. The team did not detect any oddities. Further work in this area will be picked up once Unit4 has bedded down and BAU has returned to school payroll.)</p>	
A10/23	12 July 2023	Update on the Surrey Forum and the Four Associated Strategic Partnership Boards	The Director – Corporate Strategy and Policy will liaise with the chairs of the Surrey Forum and the non-statutory boards: One Surrey Growth Board, Greener Futures Board, and Thriving Communities Board, asking whether the agendas, minutes and membership lists could be made available to all Members.	Director – Corporate Strategy and Policy	The Committee Manager shared the SharePoint site link with Committee members on 22 March 2024. The link will be shared with all Members via email from the Leader following the publication of the upcoming June Cabinet report that will provide an update on the strategic partnerships landscape.	June 2024
A16/23	12 July 2023	External Audit Plan 2022/23	The Grant Thornton representative will confirm whether PSAA has approved the proposed audit fee for 2022/23.	Grant Thornton representative	<p>As of 23 May 2024, there is no further update, PSAA are yet to sign off the final amount.</p> <p>Extract from minutes of March's (2024) Committee meeting (minute item 15/24, key point 2):</p> <p>The Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) explained that Grant Thornton</p>	May/June 2024

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					had responded that Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) had approved a series of 'bake in' variations which had been included on the audit plan for 2022/23, they do not however approve any additional variations on top of that until after the accounts are signed. The Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) noted that they were close to signing off the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. Final checks were underway, and it was hoped that it would be signed by early next week; once signed off the fee variation would be formally approved.	
Page 20 7/23	12 July 2023	Whistleblowing Annual Report	<p>The two recommendations for improvement made by the Committee will be incorporated into next year's Whistleblowing Annual Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That existing employees alongside new employees would be asked to sign the Code of Conduct too. • That the headcount figures regarding the whistleblowing cases be updated to include other employees such as those in schools and contractors. 	Head of Insight, Programmes and Governance	<p>Update provided by the Head of Insights, Systems and Governance on 10 May 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Governance training course is being produced on 'Olive', the Council's Learning Management System. This will include the Code of Conduct and a short 'test' will need to be completed by new and existing employees. This will then sit on the employee record. Go Live is estimated to be in July 2024. • We are hoping to be able to show Schools WB figures separately. Contractors would come through the Corporate reporting, but due to the confidential nature of the recording via Navex Global, these would not be identifiable at recording stage. 	July 2024

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A18/23	12 July 2023	Whistleblowing Annual Report	The Head of Insight, Programmes and Governance will ensure that next year's Whistleblowing Annual Report includes the comparison of how other councils track their grievances as well as their whistleblower cases.	Head of Insight, Programmes and Governance	<p>Update provided by the Head of Insights, Systems and Governance on 10 May 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with some partner councils in identifying how they track their grievances and will provide an overview in the Annual Report. • In addition, we have introduced a new Case Management System, which reports on our Case work by category eg. Bullying, Harassment, Grievances. • An overall HR casework statistic is reported corporately to CLT and the Resources & Performance Select Committee. 	July 2024
A35/23	22 November 2023	LGSCO Annual Letter and Complaints Handling Update	The Committee Manager will add an item to the work plan for the next Committee meeting in January where officers will present the results of the Task and Finish Group.	Committee Manager	<p>The Customer Relations Team Manager has requested that the item be further deferred from June (had been deferred from January and March), to November's 2024 Committee meeting.</p> <p>The briefing document (A33/23 - Appendix 1) provides the update on the Complaints Task and Finish Group, setting out the key elements. Once the outcome report has been to CLT, a more detailed update can be provided to the Committee.</p>	November 2024
2024						
A2/24	17 January 2024	Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25	Regarding Annex 1, paragraph 2.25 on Environmental Sustainability, the Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) will find out where that work is shared regarding the reporting of carbon impacts of the Capital Programme.	Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate)	Update as of 24 May 2024: The Greener Futures Team take an annual progress carbon report to Cabinet. The last one was November 2023: Cabinet Report - CC progress report.pdf (surreycc.gov.uk) . In addition, the Capital Programme Panel are amending the capital business case template	November 2024

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					<p>to ensure carbon impacts are captured for capital schemes.</p> <p>The Climate Change Strategic Lead (SCC) noted that she is aiming to schedule that report for the November Cabinet, prior to that the report to be received by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.</p>	
Page 22	A6/24 13 March 2024	Recommendations Tracker and Work Plan	<p>The Committee will receive the report from the Resources and Performance Select Committee's DB&I Task and Finish Group, for it to review alongside the later report from Internal Audit; ensuring that the Committee member gets an up-to-date response as to how all the complaints around late payments concerning the new Unit4/MySurrey system were being progressed.</p>	<p>Chair of the DB&I Task and Finish Group</p> <p>/</p> <p>Audit Manager</p>	<p>Update from Scrutiny Business Manager on 10 May 2024:</p> <p>The Chair of the Digital Business & Insights (DB&I) Task and Finish Group is working to a revised DB&I report timeline. The report is due to be signed off at a private Resources & Performance Select Committee meeting on 10 June prior to submission to June's Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Update provided by the Audit Manager on 10 May 2024:</p> <p>Internal Audit's Accounts Payable draft report is currently being finalised with management and should hopefully be published as a final report w/c 13 May. It will, therefore, be part of Internal Audit's summary of completed audits for Q1 as expected, which will come to the Committee in September. The opinion on the report is Partial Assurance, so the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Audit & Governance Committee will be getting Internal Audit's standard briefing note for a lower assurance audit before the end of May.</p>	<p>July 2024 - DB&I Task and Finish Group report</p> <p>September 2024 - Quarter 1 - Internal Audit's report</p>

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A10/24	13 March 2024	Ethical Standards Annual Review 2023-24	The Committee will receive the report on gifts and hospitality, interests and whistleblowing at a senior officer level alongside the annual report on Members.	Director - Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer	<p>The Committee Manager has highlighted the action to the interim Monitoring Officer/Director of Law and Governance.</p> <p>The Head of Insights, Systems and Governance is working with the interim Monitoring Officer/Director of Law and Governance. The team are pulling together the Annual Gifts & Hospitality Officer report. The Declaration of Interests report will follow later once the reporting on Unit4 functions to a satisfactory level. The developer team in IT & Digital are supporting with it.</p>	To be confirmed
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COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS/REFERRALS/ACTIONS – TO BE DELETED

2023					
A9/23	12 July 2023	Counter Fraud Annual Report 2022/23	The Audit Manager – Counter Fraud will ensure that next year’s Counter Fraud Annual Report includes an NFI results section summarising the major areas identified in the cases.	Audit Manager – Counter Fraud	The Audit Manager (Counter Fraud) has provided a section in the Counter Fraud Annual Report 2023/24 on the NFI results.
A32/23	22 November 2023	LGSCO Annual Letter and Complaints Handling Update	The Customer Relations Team Manager will look to provide a dashboard or Key Performance Indicator within the complaints annual report going forward setting out the year-on-year comparison regarding the volume of financial remedies to enable the evaluation of improvements being made.	Customer Relations Team Manager	The Annual Complaints Performance Report (June 2024) contains this information.

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A33/23	22 November 2023	LGSCO Annual Letter and Complaints Handling Update	The Head of Customer Services will share the document which set out the parameters of the Task and Finish Group.	Head of Customer Services	<p>The briefing document (A33/23 - Appendix 1) provides the update on the Complaints Task and Finish Group, setting out the key elements.</p> <p>Update which had been provided on 20 February 2024:</p> <p>The Head of Customer Services sends her apologies, requesting that she defers her item to the next available meeting please (June's Committee) - it had already been deferred from January's Committee to March. This is because she is unable to provide a detailed update currently. The outcome report has now been received and is being shared with Michael Coughlin as Director Customers and Communities. She and the Customer Relations Team Manager anticipate being able to share the full update at the next A&G Committee and respectfully, request that the item is postponed to the next available date. In the interim they can confirm that the Senior Complaints Practice Lead role, has been confirmed and recruitment is in progress.</p>
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A38/23	22 November 2023	Annual Governance Statement Half Year Update	The Director - Law and Governance will provide an update on health integration and how it was improving.	Director - Law and Governance	Extract from minutes of March's (2024) Committee meeting: the Director - Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer referred to the report going to March's Health and Wellbeing Board which outlined how health integration was improving. The Committee Manager noted that she sent the update to Committee members yesterday afternoon attaching that report titled: Health and Wellbeing Board and Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership/Integrated Care Board Governance Review.
2024					
A7/24	13 March 2024	Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 3	The Audit Manager will in future reports reword 'encouraged' to 'required' regarding school staff declaring any relevant interests.	Audit Manager	The Audit Manager has confirmed that he and the team notes the wording change for future progress report updates on schools for relevant staff.

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A8/24	13 March 2024	Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 3	The Director - Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer will confirm whether the Council's Officer Code of Conduct applied to school staff.	Director - Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer	<p>Response provided by the People Business Partner, Education and Resources, Surrey County Council:</p> <p>Noted that she has spoken to her colleague who supports Schools who has confirmed that staff are covered by the SCC Code of Conduct particularly if they are in schools where SCC (and not the governing body) is the employer (although typically all the maintained schools will adopt it).</p> <p>Schools also have what is called the Safeguarding code of conduct document, it is produced by the Education Safeguarding team annually and relates mainly to the provisions of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Probably relevant to anyone who works in regulated activity so would likely cover our Centrally Employed Teachers (CETs), Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice (STIPs), for example. The advice to schools is to publish both to staff, and to adapt the Education Safeguarding one to include anything else that is relevant to the school's context for example: use of mobile phones, camera, IT etc. so as to have one really robust document.</p>
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A9/24	13 March 2024	Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 3	The IT Audit Manager will provide written responses to the questions asked in key points 16 and 17 concerning the SFRS Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System and Adult Social Care (ASC) Data Handling audit.	IT Audit Manager	<p>The Committee Manager on 26 March 2024 circulated the below responses provided by the IT Audit Manager to the Committee:</p> <p>16. A Committee member referred to the SFRS Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System and asked whether SFRS was using the Council's project management governance framework or its own: <i>The council have a Programme & Project Management Academy which provides a methodology and framework which follows industry best practice and is grounded in Agile Project Management methodology. It is important to recognise that while the council have a framework in place, this framework is not considered mandatory. As a result, our audit work did not assess whether SFRS followed the council's framework or not, but instead assessed whether industry best practice had been followed within the project implementation.</i></p> <p>17. A Committee member referred to the Adult Social Care (ASC) Data Handling audit whereby an area for improvement was to identify a responsible officer to delete data held digitally at the end of its retention period, he deduced that the Council might be holding data past its retention period, was there an action plan and did that impact the Council's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) responsibilities. <i>There is a project underway looking at the deletion and holding of records within ASC. Following our audit, an action plan was agreed with the service where the Business Systems & Digital Team would take responsibility for looking to developing a robotic process automation to electronically purge</i></p>
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					<i>any digital records at the end of their recorded retention period.</i>
A11/24	13 March 2024	Appointment of Independent Member to the Audit and Governance Committee	The Committee Manager will send out an email to the recruitment panel noting the next steps.	Committee Manager	The Committee Manager liaised with the PA to Head of Service - Director of Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer around the recruitment process, who sent an email to the recruitment panel on 22 March 2024 noting the next steps: checking availability for the date of the interviews.

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