

Audit & Governance Committee – Recommendations Tracker

10 July 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>Extract from draft minutes, 5 June 2024: <i>the Customer Relations Manager will provide definitive responses for the September Committee.</i></p> <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>	September 2024

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Page 18			<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>As of 14 February 2024, the Customer Relations Team Manager and the team provided the following update:</p> <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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Comparative complaints figures with other local authorities. <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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Whether a similar internal investigator appointment will be beneficial for ASC and having more internal investigator roles in Education Services. <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</p>
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					<p>their own investigation. Complaints are responded to by Managers / Senior Managers who have a background in Social 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</p>	
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Page 20					<p>Chair and Vice Chair are included in the circulation of the weekly reports going forward.</p> <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</p>	
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					<p>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 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</p>	
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Page 22					<p>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 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>	
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Page 23	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 20 June 2024:</p> <p>The action is ongoing, it is hoped that work would be underway over summer once officers get access to Unit4.</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 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>	November 2024
	A10/23	12 July 2023	Update on the Surrey Forum and the Four Associated Strategic	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	Director – Corporate Strategy and Policy	<p>The Committee Manager shared the SharePoint site link with Committee members on 22 March 2024.</p> <p>(The link will be shared with all Members via email from the Leader in early July following the publication of the June Cabinet report that</p>	July 2024

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		Partnership Boards	membership lists could be made available to all Members.		provided an update on the strategic partnerships landscape.)	
Page 24	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 18 June 2024, the Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) has chased PSAA once again on the matter.</p> <p>Extract from draft minutes, 5 June 2024: <i>the Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) would follow up an update for the July Committee.</i></p> <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 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</p>	July 2024

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					signed by early next week; once signed off the fee variation would be formally approved.	
Page 25	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 20 June 2024: the training course and communications on the Code of Conduct will go live shortly. She noted that the schools figures are now shown in the <u>Annual Whistleblowing Report 2023/24</u> in the July 2024 Committee agenda.</p> <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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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) in June's agenda provided 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						
Page 26 A36/24	13 March 2024	Recommendations Tracker and Work Plan	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>Chair of the DB&I Task and Finish Group</p> <p>/</p> <p>Audit Manager</p>	<p>The Committee Manager will circulate the report to Committee members once published in July's Cabinet agenda.</p> <p>Extract from draft minutes, 5 June 2024: <i>[The Chairman] noting that the 10 June Resources and Performance Select Committee private online meeting to confirm the Digital Business & Insights (DB&I) report would be pushed back to late June or early July, as the final report was being delayed to July's Cabinet.</i></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>July 2024 - DB&I Task and Finish Group report</p> <p>September 2024 - Quarter 1 - Internal Audit's report</p>

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Page 27					<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>	
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.	Interim Director - Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer / Head of Insights, Systems and Governance	<p>The Committee Manager on 17 June 2024 has added an item to July's Committee agenda concerning officers' gifts and hospitality: Annual Report on Gifts and Hospitality Activity.</p> <p>The Head of Insights, Systems and Governance has noted that 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>	<p>July 2024 - officers' gifts and hospitality</p> <p>To be confirmed - officers' Declaration of Interests</p>
A12/24	5 June 2024	Annual Complaints Performance Report	The Assistant Director - Quality Relationships will provide the information benchmarked from other local authorities regarding the complaints in Children's	Assistant Director - Quality Relationships		TBC

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			Services, as gathered from their annual complaints report.			
A13/24	5 June 2024	Annual Complaints Performance Report	The Customer Relations Manager will provide the information requested regarding the number of contacts received via non-electronic methods.	Customer Relations Manager		TBC
A14/24	5 June 2024	Annual Complaints Performance Report	The Assistant Director - Inclusion and Additional Needs will liaise with the relevant assistant director to provide the recommendations on the programme of work around children missing education.	Assistant Director - Inclusion and Additional Needs		TBC

COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS/REFERRALS/ACTIONS – TO BE DELETED

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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>The Head of Insights, Systems and Governance noted that the action is covered within the <u>Annual Whistleblowing Report 2023/24</u> in the July 2024 Committee agenda.</p> <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.
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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 18 June 2024: The Greener Futures Team take an annual progress carbon report to Cabinet. The Climate Change Strategic Lead (SCC) will schedule that report for the November Cabinet, prior to that the report to be received by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee. 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 to ensure carbon impacts are captured for capital schemes.
A15/24	5 June 2024	External Audit Plan 2023/24	The Committee Manager will update the work plan adding in the deferred item and respective recommendation to July's Committee agenda for approval and that report will include the fee range to be provided by the Partner - EY.	Committee Manager and Partner - EY	The Committee Manager on 17 June 2024 had updated the work plan adding in the deferred item and respective recommendation to July's Committee agenda for approval.

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A16/24	5 June 2024	Internal Audit Annual Report And Opinion 2023-24	<p>The Audit Manager will provide the summaries of agreed actions by management regarding the following audits as requested by the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Section 106 Payments b) Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments Communication Protocol c) LiquidLogic Integrated Finance Technology (LIFT) 	Audit Manager	Following receipt from the Audit Manager, the Committee Manager circulated the three summaries of agreed actions to the Committee on 6 June 2024.
A17/24	5 June 2024	Counter Fraud Annual Report 2023/24	The Audit Manager - Counter Fraud and Interim Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services will follow up with the Committee member regarding the non-participation of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on the Single Person Discount (SPD) review.	Audit Manager - Counter Fraud and Interim Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services	The Strategic Finance Business Partner (Corporate) and Interim Executive Director - Finance and Corporate Services discussed the matter with the Committee member after the Committee meeting on 5 June 2024.

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