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Rutland County Council

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

A meeting of the **RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL** will be held in the Council Chamber on **Thursday, 10th November, 2016** commencing at 7.00 pm when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

Yours faithfully

Helen Briggs
Chief Executive

Recording of Council Meetings: Any member of the public may film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media to report the proceedings of any meeting that is open to the public. A protocol on this facility is available at www.rutland.gov.uk/haveyoursay

A G E N D A

APOLOGIES

1) RECORD OF MEETING

To confirm the record of the meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 11 August 2016 (previously circulated).

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members are invited to declare any disclosable interests under the Code of Conduct and the nature if those interests in respect of items on this Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

3) PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

To receive any petitions, deputations and questions received from Members of the Public in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 217.

The total time allowed for this item shall be 30 minutes. Petitions, declarations and questions shall be dealt with in the order in which they are received. Questions may also be submitted at short notice by giving a written copy to the

Committee Administrator 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

The total time allowed for questions at short notice is 15 minutes out of the total time of 30 minutes. Any petitions, deputations and questions that have been submitted with prior formal notice will take precedence over questions submitted at short notice. Any questions that are not considered within the time limit shall receive a written response after the meeting and be the subject of a report to the next meeting.

4) QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

To consider any questions with notice from Members received in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rules No 219 and 219A.

5) NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

To consider any Notices of Motion from Members submitted in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule No 220.

6) CONSIDERATIONS OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

To consider any matter referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

7) QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

To receive Report No 191/2016 from the Director for Resources
(Report to be circulated under separate cover)

8) QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

To receive Report No. 194/2016 from the Director for Resources
(Report to be circulated under separate cover)

9) COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS: ANNUAL REPORT

To receive Report No 198/2016 from the Director for Resources
(Pages 5 - 36)

10) POVERTY SCRUTINY PROJECT

To receive Report No 195/2016 from the Director for Resources
(Pages 37 - 54)

11) REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

To consider Scrutiny issues to review
Copies of the Forward Plan will be available at the meeting

12) ANY URGENT BUSINESS

To receive any items of urgent business which have been previously notified to the person presiding.

13) DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

16th February 2017

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DISTRIBUTION

MEMBERS OF THE RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL:

Mr A Walters (Chairman)

Mr O Bird

Mr K Bool

Mr B Callaghan

Mr G Conde

Mr W Cross

Mr J Lammie

Mrs D MacDuff

Mr A Stewart

Miss G Waller

OTHER MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION

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RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

10 November 2016

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL REPORT

Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	Sound Financial and Workforce Planning	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr T C King, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Development	
Contact Officer(s):	Debbie Mogg, Director for Resources	01572 758358 dmogg@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Review and discuss the content of this report and provide feedback on recommended improvements to the current process.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Resources Scrutiny Panel with an overview of the management and effectiveness the Councils' Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 On 7th October 2014 Cabinet approved the current Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy, the process is now firmly embedded and this is the second annual report on the performance of the scheme (albeit the first report only covered a six month period).
- 2.2 The implementation of a revised policy introduced a number of elements, which were missing from the old scheme, namely:
 - The inclusion of compliments and comments over and above the usual complaints management;
 - Reduced timescales for dealing with responses to complaints;
 - The inclusion and management of a vexatious complainant protocol; and

- Better governance around recording, monitoring and reporting performance and outcomes.

2.3 In addition, all officers are required to use corporate templates to respond to customers and send copies of responses through to the Governance Team for quality assurance purposes. They are also required to provide a précis of any service improvements arising from customer feedback. The Governance Coordinator carries out sample quality assurance checks and raises any issue with the lead officer. Service improvements are currently being registered; this is a recent improvement to the process albeit later than anticipated due to electoral pressures and staffing changes. Therefore data from 'You said...We Did' will be available in the next annual Report.

2.4 Councillor Conduct issues fall outside the parameters of this scheme; these are reported to Conduct Committee as a separate matter.

3 STATISTICS FOR 2015/16

3.1 During the period of this report customer feedback was registered as follows:

Compliments – 162 received. Details of all compliments can be seen at Appendix A.

Comments – 27 received. Details of all comments can be seen at Appendix B.

Complaints – 164 received. Details of all complaints can be seen at Appendix C.

3.2 Compliments and comments are passed on to Service Heads as soon as they are acknowledged by the Governance Team. This feedback helps to shape future service delivery and support recognition schemes, such as the new Customer Service Awards.

3.3 Complaints are processed in accordance with agreed response times of 10 working days for Stage 1 complaints and a further 10 working days for Stage 2 complaints.

3.4 The table in the Performance Statistics section (below) demonstrates our compliance with these targets.

4 VEXATIOUS ACTIVITY

4.1 During the period of this report one case was logged as a Vexatious Complainant. This case was managed via a Single Point of Contact and was reviewed after six months. On review, it was evident that the customer's behaviour had improved and the restriction on contact was removed accordingly.

5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

5.1 The LGO handled 10 complaints during this reporting year (one was carried across to the current year) in circumstances where the customer had exhausted the Council's internal complaints procedure. No cases were upheld by the LGO. In the previous year, the LGO handled 14 complaints and upheld one matter. The Council's revised process now provides a more robust overview at Stages 1 and 2 within a shorter period of time. Despite the increase in complaints to the Council, it

appears more customers are satisfied with the outcomes of our internal scrutiny and feel less inclined to progress a matter to the LGO. This is a positive element of the revised process. The LGO's annual letter and report can be seen at Appendix D.

6 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

6.1 We rigorously record compliance against complaint response target times. These results are published quarterly as part of the Council's performance monitoring mechanism. The statistics in the tables below show that we are achieving good results in our response times. Some improvements are still necessary and we are working to address this by increasing our reminder prompts to officers tasked with dealing with the complaints. This has already shown positive results for the first 6 months of 2016/17 where we achieved 90% compliance with timescales.

	People	Places	Resources	Total
Stage 1 Total	50	96	18	164
Number exceeding 10 day response target	20	23	1	39
% within 10 day response target	62%	77%	94%	76.2%

	People	Places	Resources	Total
Stage 2 Total	8	13	2	23
Number exceeding 10 day response target	0	5	1	6
% within 10 day response target	100%	62%	50%	70.6%

6.2 In total, 164 complaints were received during 2015/16, with 125 (76.2%) resolved within agreed timescales. The table below shows a breakdown of categories and the percentage of upheld outcomes in each category:

<u>People Numbers</u>	Category of Complaint	Upheld	%
1	Access to Resources	0	0
5	Delays/No Response/Poor Service	3	60
26	Care/Safeguarding/SEN	7 5 – Partially Upheld	27 19
14	Officer Conduct	3	21

People Numbers	Category of Complaint	Upheld	%
		2 – partially Upheld	14
1	Finance	1	100
3	Other	3	100

Places Numbers	Category of Complaint	Upheld	%
19	Waste	5 2 – Partially Upheld	26 11
11	Vehicles/Highways	7 1 – Partially Upheld	64 9
13	Buses/Transport/Parking	5	38
31	Grounds/Cemetery	20 4 – Partially Upheld	65 13
7	Planning	2 1 – Partially Upheld	29 14
4	Officer Conduct	2	50
1	Licensing	1 – Partially Upheld	100
2	Access	1	50
8	Other	2 – Partially Upheld	25

<u>Resources</u> Numbers	Category of Complaint	Upheld	%
2	Information Related	2	100
2	Revs & Bens	1	50
9	Elections	7	78
1	HR Related	0	0
2	Finance Related	1 – Partially Upheld	50
2	Other	0	0

7 PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

7.1 As part of the first annual report, we identified a need for improvements in the following areas:

7.1.1 An analysis of trends to be undertaken at mid-year and end of year to identify key issues.

Findings to be included in the next annual report. Details have been collated and can be seen in the table above and Appendices attached to this report. A further analysis will be undertaken before the end of 2016 as part of the 'You said...We Did' development (see c. below).

7.1.2 A review of how departments are managing learning points from outcomes to be undertaken. We need to identify how we can develop service delivery to reduce the upheld: not upheld ratio for the future.

The Governance Coordinator regular attends the Children's Quality Assurance meetings to provide feedback on complaints. Attendance at Departmental Management Team (DMT) meetings have also been a regular occurrence, where service improvements and complaint management have been discussed.

7.1.3 Establish a link to show our customers how 'You said...We Did' translates into clear service improvements. Promote this openly on the Council's website and through social media channels.

Development of this part of the process is still in progress. Staff changes and the recent electoral pressures have caused a delay. It is expected this will be embedded by the end of 2016 (data is already being captured to inform the reporting process). We will also promote the adoption of good practice across the Council as part of this implementation i.e. lessons learned from compliments and comments can be rolled-out across the organisation if appropriate.

7.1.4 A proactive approach to engage customers in providing feedback to be extended to all departments. We will also work with departments to encourage them to report compliments.

A Compliments, Comments and Complaints leaflet has been developed; this is being proactively promoted by officers within the People Directorate when they visit customers at home. It provides an overview of the process and explains how they can express their views. This leaflet will be available across all areas of the Council in the near future.

The number of compliments has risen since last year (we recorded 17 in quarter 4 of 2014/15); we will continue to encourage reporting of all customer feedback.

- 7.1.5 An analysis of responses will be undertaken by the Governance Team to ensure our replies to complaints are consistent and professional. Advice and guidance will be offered where appropriate.

The Governance Coordinator samples responses to customers. Feedback is provided where improvements are identified. One example is the use of naming conventions – this was found to be inconsistent in some cases. Also, the use of corporate templates has improved and all responses are now issued in the same format.

- 7.1.6 The Governance Team will continue to monitor compliance with the target response times and provide management statistics where we have failed to achieve this target.

The performance statistics are reported as part of the Council's overall performance monitoring mechanism. A more robust approach to issuing reminders has been adopted (from quarter 1 2016/17) and the statistics around compliance are much improved. Managers have responded positively to this enhancement as it helps them to be compliant with the Policy.

- 7.1.7 The Governance Coordinator has attended a training course, which addressed 'how to turn Public Sector complaints into service improvements'. This will assist with the development of 'You said...We did'.

- 7.1.8 It is proposed that we start to compare and record our performance against other authorities; benchmarking statistics will be included in future annual reports alongside other good practice improvements identified as part of this exercise.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report but there is a cost associated with managing this process. Dealing with complaint effectively at an early stage prevents them from escalating thereby reducing the overall time spent on handling them.

- 8.2 There is a risk that failure to properly manage the process could result in a complaint being upheld by the LGO and this may result in the award of financial compensation. There is no tariff of compensation awards; each case is assessed on its individual circumstances on the basis of quantifiable loss.

9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Council has an ongoing obligation to manage and act upon customer feedback. The LGO considers a complaints system to be an integral part of a Council's service provision and believes the authority should take responsibility for

putting things right.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as the report concerns internal administrative processes.

11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 There are no additional background papers to the report

14 APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix A – Compliments Apr to Mar

14.2 Appendix B – Comments Apr to Mar

14.3 Appendix C – Complaints Apr to Mar

14.4 Appendix D – LGO Annual Review Letter

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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COMPLIMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX A

Ref	Category	Subject	Ward Area
Places			
157	Culture & Leisure - Museum	VE Day Anniversary events	Oakham
167	Culture & Leisure - Library	Oakham Library Service	Oakham
171	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Museum Services	Unknown
177	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar	Unknown
124	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Wedding ceremony.	Normanton
201	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Museum - Craft Days	Unknown
208	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar - Wedding Services	Unknown
148	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Excellent service.	Unknown
165	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar	Unknown
189	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar - Wedding Services	Out of Area
223	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Excellent Service	Unknown
225	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar	Unknown
248	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Museum - Reminiscence sessions	Unknown
190 ³	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar - Baby Naming Ceremony	Unknown
294	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Good Service	Uppingham
300	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Good Service	Oakham
191	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar - Wedding Services	Unknown
347	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Good Service	Unknown
354	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Good Service	Langham
426	Culture & Leisure - Museum	"Great Evening" Rutland Open Art Exhibition	Unknown
222	Culture & Leisure - Library	Excellent Service	Unknown
192	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Museum Services - Family archive	Unknown
339	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar	Unknown
197	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar - Wedding Services	Unknown
402	Culture & Leisure - Museum	Excellent Service	Unknown
410	Culture & Leisure - Library	Everyone is so nice, helpful and interested	Uppingham
179	Culture & Leisure - Registrar	Registrar	Out of Area
166	Environmental Services	Waste	Unknown
308	Environmental Services	Good Service	Oakham
138	Environmental Services	CA Site - Friendly staff and clean facilities	Cottesmore
306	Environmental Services	Good Service	Lyndon
270	Environmental Services	Grass Cutting	Oakham SE
180	Environmental Services	Ryhall Cemetery Maintenance	Ryhall

COMPLIMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX A

Ref	Category	Subject	Ward Area
341	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
310	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
362	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
281	Environmental Services	Good service at civic amenity sites	Unknown
288	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
383	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
348	Environmental Services	Good Service	Empingham
353	Environmental Services	Good Service	Uppingham
284	Environmental Services	Good Service	Unknown
182	Environmental Services	Grass Cutting staff	Barrow
416	Environmental Services / Highways	"Clean for the Queen" Event	South Luffenham
218	Highways	Erection of sign	Uppingham
367	Highways	Good Service	Uppingham
377	Highways	Excellent Service	Whissendine
382	Highways	Good Service	Unknown
326 ¹⁴	Highways	Good Service	Unknown
361	Highways	Good Service	Unknown
303	Highways	Good Service	Unknown
360	Highways	Good Service	Unknown
425	Highways	"Fantastic" new footpath	Cottesmore
252	Highways	New bridge Mill Lane Ketton	Ketton
219	Highways	Repair of Speed Sign	Normanton
272	Building Control	Excellent service	Oakham NW
292	Building Control	Good Service	Unknown
309	Development Control	Windfarm Application -Good Service	Greetham
311	Development Control	Good Service	Braunston and Belton
313	Development Control	Windfarm Application - Good Service	Unknown
358	Development Control	Good Service	Unknown
430	Development Control	"prompt, efficient and friendly way in which your reception and the planning department have dealt with my enquiries".	Unknown
363	Parking	Excellent Service	Unknown
178	Transport	Local Hooper Bus Service	Oakham
199	Transport	WeCars - staff member	Not applicable

COMPLIMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX A

Ref	Category	Subject	Ward Area
393	Transport	Very Good	Langham
412	Transport	Thought the Travel Survey was excellent.	Uppingham
431	Community Safety	"Thank-you for working with us to resolve local youth encroachment"	Oakham NW
Resources			
97	Elections	Help with nomination papers	Unknown
159	Corporate Support Team	Support for New Councillor	Not applicable
264	Corporate Support Team	Loggist Support	Not applicable
434	Corporate Support Team	"Big thanks for getting the Hoople workshops organised for next week with rooms and lunch"	Unknown
215	Corporate Support Team	Work experience	Uppingham
286	Governance	Good Service	Unknown
249	Blue Badges	Replacement Blue Badge	Unknown
304	Blue Badges	Good Service	Ketton
315	Blue Badges	Good Service	Unknown
330	Blue Badges	Good Service	Uppingham
174	Revenues & Benefits	Capital Funding	Unknown
92	Revenues & Benefits	Appreciates council tax support	Oakham North West
196	Revenues & Benefits	Quick service	Unknown
198	Revenues & Benefits	Quick Service re Council Tax Billing	Unknown
251	Revenues & Benefits	Excellent Service	Unknown
261	Revenues & Benefits	Excellent Service	Uppingham
104	Customer Services	Bin repair	Ketton
111	Customer Services	"Brilliant service".	Unknown
137	Customer Services	"Brilliant service".	Exton and Horn
136	Customer Services	"Helpful and polite"	Oakham North East
153	Customer Services	"How can you improve on perfection?"	Oakham North East
154	Customer Services	"Exemplorary service"	Oakham North East
155	Customer Services	"Excellent service".	Oakham North East
335	Customer Services	Good Service	Unknown
346	Customer Services	Good Service	Langham
359	Customer Services	Good Service	Unknown
379	Chief Executive	Great Service	Unknown
People			
106	Adult Social Care	Respite care	Out of Rutland.

COMPLIMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX A

Ref	Category	Subject	Ward Area
107	Adult Social Care	Rutland Care Village	Oakham North West
125	Adult Social Care	Thanks for support.	Unknown
149	Adult Social Care	Thanks for support.	Unknown
142	Adult Social Care	Thanks for invitation to and information received at Carer's Event.	Oakham North East
	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service - total of 34 compliments	Unknown
132	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Unknown
181	Adult Social Care	Reach Team - Care Package	Unknown
187	Adult Social Care	Reach Team - Installation of a clock	Unknown
250	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Unknown
262	Adult Social Care	Carers Services - Excellent Service	Unknown
263	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Ketton
265	Adult Social Care	Carers Services - Excellent Service with a care plan	Oakham NE
266	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Greetham
327	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Langham
296	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Oakham
328	Adult Social care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Unknown
389	Adult Social Care	Good Service	Unknown
274	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Braunston & Belton in Rutland
276	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Uppingham
352	Adult Social care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Unknown
280	Adult Social Care	REACH Team - Excellent Service	Braunston & Belton in Rutland
316	Aiming High	Good Service	Unknown
386	Aiming High	Positive feedback from Survey	Unknown
320	Education	Good Service	Unknown
325	Activity session at Visions	Good Service	Unknown
345	Families Support - Early Intervention	Good Service	Unknown
374	Visions	Good Service	Unknown
419	Fostering	"Hard work on a case"	Unknown
287	Youth Council Budget	Complaint turned into compliment	Exton
206	Families Support - Early Intervention	Health Visitors 2 year development check	Empingham

Ref	Category	Subject	Ward Area
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Places	68
Resources	27
People	67
Total	162

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COMMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX B

Ref	Category	Issue	Action Taken	Ward Area
Resources				
119	Revenues and Benefits	Vacant property discount scheme	Customer was offered advice	Unknown
408	Revenues and Benefits	Website - Unable to find Council Tax Bands	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Comments forwarded to Council Tax	Unknown
239	Website	Website design and general website comments	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Customer asked for no response	N/A
247	Elections	Canvas reminders 2015	None required	Unknown
277	Street Name & Numbering	Setting up an automatic response	None required	Empingham
Places				
139	Culture and Leisure Services	Leisure	None required	Out of Rutland
146	Culture and Leisure Services	Eating in library	None required	Oakham North East
407	Culture and Leisure Services	Information on Audio Books	None required	N/A
202	Parking	Residents Parking on Deans St Oakham	None required	Oakham
135	Environmental Services	Weeds at Catmose	Manager already aware and actioning	Oakham North East
221	Environmental Services	Highways & Weeding	None required	Oakham SW

COMMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX B

Ref	Category	Issue	Action Taken	Ward Area
233	Environmental Services	Highways	None required	Unknown
243	Transport	Road Rage	None required	Hambleton
244	Highways	Parking on Uppingham Road, Oakham	None required	Oakham SE
245	Highways	Road Works on Burley Road in Oakham	None required	Oakham NE
398	Highways	Website - Poor info regarding Roadworks	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Comments forwarded to Highways	Unknown
405	Highways	Terrible Website	Ongoing redevelopment of website.	Unknown
285 ²⁹	Highways	Newtown Road Footpath	None required	Uppingham
307	Digital Rutland	Digital Rutland	None required	Lyddington
340	Website	Website - Not fit for purpose - radical new image required	Ongoing redevelopment of website	Unknown
406	Development Control	Website - No fee costs for Form 25. Form doesn't print out properly. PDF so can't be filled in online.	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Comments forwarded on to Development Control	Unknown
333	Development Control	Website	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Comments forwarded on to Development Control	Unknown
334	Development Control	Website	Ongoing redevelopment of website. Comments forwarded on to Development Control	Unknown
417	Development Control	Planning Application	Forwarded onto Planning	Unknown

COMMENTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX B

Ref	Category	Issue	Action Taken	Ward Area
People				
184	Adult Social Care	Manton Hall Care Home	None required	Manton
237	Children Social Care	Attendance at safeguarding meeting	Unknown	Unknown
260	Fostering & Adoption	Member of Staff not wearing ID badge	Discussion held with member of staff	Ryhall & Casterton

Places	19
Resources	5
People	3
Total	27

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COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX C

Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
Places						
141	Environmental Services	7	Abandoned Vehicle	Upheld	Removal of abandoned vehicle - Explanation provided to complainant via meeting. Procedures revised.	Out of Rutland.
99	Environmental Services	9	Environmental Services - Bins not collected.	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to complainant.	Oakham South West
96	Environmental Services	1	Environmental Services - Bins hadn't been cleared	Upheld	Complainant's requests have been actioned.	Greetham.
414	Environmental Services	41	Ranksborough Hall Estates	Partially upheld	Inspections of site to take place	Barleythorpe
143	Environmental Services	Open	Environmental Services - Cemetery in poor condition	Upheld	Work taken place at the cemetery to improve general condition	Out of Rutland.
351/Corp	Environmental Services	3	Internment	Partially upheld	Apology to complainant.	Unknown
356/Corp	Environmental Services	13	Oakham Cemetery	Upheld	Contractor will take steps to avoid reoccurrence	Unknown
364	Environmental Services	1	Grass Verges Churned Up	Upheld	Lights repaired by Eon on 21/22 Jan 16. Highways Officer to investigate grass verge and action.	Unknown
162	Environmental Services	1	Environmental Services - Grass Cutting	Upheld	Grass Cutting undertaken	Oakham South West
163	Environmental Services	72	Environmental Services - Grass Cutting	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent redirecting the customer to Spire Homes as not RCC land	Braunston & Belton
170	Environmental Services	53	Environmental Services - Grass Cutting	Upheld	Explanation letter sent review taking place	Oakham North West
173	Environmental Services	9	Footpaths	Not upheld	Relevant information provided to the customer in a letter	Braunston & Belton
185	Environmental Services	5	Environmental Services - hedge Maintenance	Upheld	Hedges cut	Oakham NE
186	Environmental Services	5	Environmental Services - Civic Amenity site - Service	Not upheld	None necessary	Normanton
332/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Bin Collection over Christmas	Not upheld	Stage 2	Martinsthorpe
336/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Bin Collection over Christmas	Not upheld	None necessary	Normanton
324/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Waste collections over Christmas	Not upheld	None necessary	Ketton
331/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Missed Christmas Waste Collection	Not upheld	None necessary	Ryhall & Casterton

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX C

Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
368	Environmental Services	9	Damaged Road Verge	Not upheld	Advised that it is not necessary to install more signage. Our current sign policy seeks to minimise unnecessary sign clutter and not add to it unnecessarily.	Thistleton
369	Environmental Services	9	Hedge Cutting & Waste Bins	Upheld	Hedges cut back and waste bin repositioned.	Oakham SE
373	Environmental Services	1	Ashwell Canal Gravel for Footway	Upheld	Spoken to complainant and all resolved.	Unknown
376	Environmental Services	8	Public Protection	Partially upheld	Grant funding available. Customer reimbursed for the service of the gas fire and the capping of a washing machine tap, at £81.60. Stage 2	North Luffenham
380	Environmental Services	10	Waste Bins	Not upheld	Stage 2	Wing
381	Environmental Services	3	Cottesmore Civic Amenity Site	Not upheld	Followed correct guidelines.	Unknown
427	Environmental Services	29	Cleaning of Street Gutters	Upheld	Proposed solution is to 'letter drop' all of the properties in the street, requesting that residents' vehicles are moved on a specific day/time to enable the cleansing to take place.	Oakham NW
338/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Bin Collection over Christmas	Not upheld	None necessary	Lyddington
391	Environmental Services	27	Waste Collection Service	Upheld	CST reminded of the correct procedure to follow when booking collections. i.e. that a collection will take place "on either the Monday or the Tuesday".	Unknown
392	Environmental Services	26	Waste Collection Service	Not upheld	Waste Contracts Officer has spoken to the CST to remind them of the correct procedure to follow in advising customers of the removal of bulky items.	Exton
203	Environmental Services	22	Damage to rose plant whilst grass cutting	Upheld	GroundForce to supply new rose plant to the customer	Oakham SE
204	Environmental Services	13	Grass Cutting (Large Stones on Verge)	Upheld	Grass Cutting undertaken	Normanton
209	Environmental Services	37	Environmental Services - Hedge cutting (no response to 1st email)	Upheld	Vegetation letter sent to the owner of the hedge that needs to be trimmed.	Oakham SE
210	Environmental Services	37	Environmental Services - Mobile Home Park Site Licensing	Partially upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Langham
211	Environmental Services	37	Environmental Services - Damage to plant pot by Refuse collection lorry	Partially upheld	Customer advised to send evidence to Cory Environmental for compensation. Stage 2	Ketton
98	Environmental Services	13	Recycling Centre - Conduct of officer	Not upheld	Explanation of findings offered to complainant post an enquiry.	Normanton

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

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Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
110	Environmental Services	10	Environmental Services - Land surrounding Tesco unkept.	Upheld	Explanation and reassurance provided to complainant.	Oakham North East
150	Environmental Services	5	Environmental Services - Roadside verge grass cut inappropriately.	Upheld	Apology provided to complainant	Normanton
101	Environmental Services	2	Environmental Services - Roadside covered in litter.	Upheld	Explanation and resolution offered to complainant.	Normanton
349/Corp	Environmental Services	16	Environmental Issue (Chimney)	Not upheld	Explanation given to the customer of processes and decisions made.	Uppingham
145	Environmental Services	1	Environmental Services - Civic Amenity Site closed prior to advertised access times.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant.	Cottesmore
217	Environmental Services	8	Pole on Royces Playing Field	Upheld	Invite to meeting re CCTV and demonstration	Oakham NW
232	Environmental Services	6	Disabled access around Oakham	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent with details of a review taking place	Oakham Town Centre
234	Environmental Services	4	Environmental Services - Noise	Ongoing	Investigation taking place	Ryhall
C56-15	Environmental Services	2	Environmental Services - Litter (ongoing)	Upheld	Litter pick arranged, and confirmation bins being replaced.	Unknown
396	Environmental Services	22	Dustbin Lorry	Not upheld	Cory confirmed that the driver involved in this particular incident had been spoken to and reminded of the requirements. All drivers reminded that they MUST abide to the speed limits and that if they do not, this will lead to disciplinary action.	Manton
397	Environmental Services -	42	Cemetery at Kilburn Road	Partially upheld	Issue to be raised with Oakham Town Council to get their views, and ideally to work out the details in terms of the aesthetics, materials, wording and location of the sign(s).	Oakham SW
314/Corp	Environmental Services	17	Cory Refuge Collectors	Partially upheld	Witness statements received. Differing statements. Video footage taken.	Greetham
323/Corp	Environmental Services	1	Waste collections over Christmas	Not upheld	None necessary	Ryhall & Casterton
112	Environmental Services	7	Environmental Services - Dust cart damaging front garden.	Upheld	Explanation provided to complainant.	Normanton
120	Environmental Services	Open	Environmental Services - Grass not cut in Health Drive Play Area	Upheld	Grass cutting undertaken	Cottesmore

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX C

Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
95	Environmental Services	9	Environmental Services - Grass has been killed	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to complainant.	Oakham South West
257/Corp	Environmental Services	99	Hedgerow Cutting - Moor Lane	Not upheld	Area inspected with no issues found. One side of the lane has been cut, should the landowner on the opposite side, not cut back before spring and the growth encroaches on the carriageway, notice will be served.	Normanton
267/Corp	Environmental Services	8	Biomass boiler - Environmental Health	Not upheld	BioMass Boiler not in RCC area	Greetham
279/Corp	Environmental Services	73	Cycle Path Neglect	Partially upheld	Trench now reinstated.	Martinsthorpe
283/Corp	Environmental Services	21	Hortons Lane - Verge	Upheld	Investigation on current position and state of verge.	Whissendine
299/Corp	Environmental Services	25	Play Area between Welland Way, Glen Drive and Chater Drive	Upheld	Offer to provide additional planting. Stage 2	Oakham SW
113 26	Environmental Services	N/A	Environmental Services - Hedge trimmings left to rot.	Upheld	No response given to complainant as was her request.	Whissendine
161	Transport	25	Transport - Bus Service	Not upheld	No further action necessary	Greetham
212	Transport	1	School Transport - Delay with Bus Pass	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent	Normanton
213	Transport	5	School Transport - Wilds Lodge	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent	Oakham SW
302/Corp	Transport	9	Exton Bus Service	Upheld	Incidents to be investigated.	Unknown
152	Transport	9	Transport - Attitude of bus driver.	Upheld	Apology and explanation of research provided to complainant.	Oakham North East
93	Transport	12	Transport - Bus driver ignored complainant.	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to complainant.	Uppingham
385	Transport	-	SEN Transport	Appeal Launched	An appeal was launched.	Unknown
390	Transport	9	Bus Service Complaint	Appeal Launched	Full investigation being carried out by Centrebus.	Unknown
105	Transport	1	Transport - Waiting facilities not safe on bus route.	Not upheld	Arranged meeting with complainant.	Braunston and Belton
319/Corp	Transport	4	Langham School Bus changes & lack of communication	Not upheld	Stage 2	Langham
342/Corp	Highways	9	Patching Works - Cow Lane	Partially upheld	Stage 2	Whissendine
350/Corp	Highways	7	Harrier Close Cottesmore	Upheld	Claim form for damaged vehicle sent to complainant	Unknown
365	Highways	0	Speed Warning Sign in Market Overton	Upheld	Additional signage to be erected.	Market Overton

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

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Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
413	Highways	13	Highways Problem A47 Glaston	Partially upheld	Street Scene Officer investigated other complaints of mud on this stretch of road during December and January and that the sweeper was sent out in both instances to clear	Glaston
109	Highways	1	Environmental Services - Tree covers solar panels and is infested with fungi.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant.	Oakham North West
115	Highways	10	Highways - Poor road conditon (Glebe Way)	Upheld	Repair work due to begin.	Oakham South West
158	Highways	9	Highways - Ordering of speed safety signs hasn't been actioned.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant.	Ryhall and Casterton
273/Corp	Highways	16	Road Condition - Highways	Upheld	Appropriate repairs to be carried out	Ryhall & Casterton
424	Highways	18	Merry Monk Building Works	Upheld	Highways Authority does have powers under the Highways Act Section 168 to ensure that precautions are taken during work near to or in the highway. Will continue to monitor the site to ensure that this does not happen.	Oakham NE
27						
200	Highways	1	Highways (no response to previous service request)	Upheld	Stage 1 & 2 vegetation letter sent to the owner of the hedge that needs to be trimmed.	Ryhall & Casterton
366	Highways	4	Untreated Ice on A606 nr Langham - road traffic accident	Not upheld	Additional resources were sent as soon as the issue was raised.	Langham
401	Housing	13	Accomodation Issue	Not upheld	Explanation given to the customer on the timeline and the actions taken	Oakham NW
278/Corp	Housing	6	Housing Issue	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to Sir A Duncan	Oakham SW
429	Housing	9	Housing Allocation Complaint	Not upheld	N/A	Oakham NW
433	Development Control	10	Planning Site Meeting	Upheld	Apology given that the service provided has fallen below the standards. Full refund in line with the provisions of the County Council's guidance and charges document on preliminary planning advice.	Unknown
421	Development Control	1	Sycamore Trees	Not upheld	Trees in good condition.	Whitwell
394	Development Control	3	Planning Application	Not upheld	Local Planning Authority complied fully with its statutory requirements.	Unknown
301/Corp	Development Control	5	Tree Preservation Order	Not upheld	Stage 2	Unknown
231	Development Control	0	Planning Application	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent	Uppingham
147	Development Control	4	Development Control - Delay in preliminary planning reference response.	Upheld	Apology given and refunded cost of the preliminary enquiry	Ketton
216	Development Control	6	Non response from Planning Officer	Upheld	Letter sent responding to original concerns that were not responded to	Uppingham

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

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Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
241	Development Control	8	Planning - CCTV Mast	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Oakham NW
242	Development Control	4	Planning - Section 106 Error	Not upheld	None made as a result of this complaint	Oakham SW
343/Corp	Development Control	2	66 South Street Planning	Partially upheld	1) Apology give for late call back . 2)Behaviour of officer Not upheld. 3&4) explanation of actions	Oakham SE
269/Corp	Parking	8	Unpaid Parking fines	Not upheld	Reduced payment schedule offered to the customer. Stage 2	Out of Area
297/Corp	Parking	5	Parking Permit Charges	Upheld	Charges Waived.	Unknown
275/Corp	Culture & Leisure	2	Staff Member at Oakham Library	Upheld	Discussion held with relevant staff member	Exton
422	New Street Name	1	New Street Name	Upheld	PS to contact to discuss locations. Order to be raised after 1 Apr 16 and the name plate installed within 3 months.	Whissendine
103	Equality Act	1	Lack of disabled access at Ryhall Village Hall	Upheld	Liaised with Peterborough Legal.	Ryhall and Casterton
Resources						
128	Corporate Support	4	Incorrect details kept.	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided	Braunston and Belton
282/Corp	Corporate Support	4	Resources Agendas	Upheld	Apology to complainant.	Normanton
129	Corporate Support	5	Conduct of Ketton Parish Council	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant as outside RCC remit.	Ketton
118	Election	3	Lack of assistance regarding where to hand in postal vote	Upheld	Reassurances and explanation offered to complainant.	Oakham North East
133	Elections	9	Lack of information - Police and Crime Commissioner elections.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant.	Oakham South East.
140	Elections	25	Complainant unable to vote.	Upheld	Apology and explanation provided to complainant. Procedures revised (additional training).	Uppingham
240	Elections - Canvas reminder	6	Elections - Canvas reminder	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Uppingham
246	Elections - Canvas reminder	2	Elections - Canvas reminder	Upheld	Letter of apology & explanation	Oakham NE
116	Revenues and Benefits	10	Statutory Council Tax appeal	Not upheld	Explanation provided to complainant. Customer has opted to progress to Stage 2 of the process.	Out of Rutland.
305/Corp	Revenues and Benefits	22	Licensing/Business Rates	Upheld	Matters are not dealt with by RCC	Martinsthorpe
329/Corp	Revenues and Benefits	8	Council tax - waiting for a letter	Upheld	Work underway to resolve issues with making payments through website	Oakham SW
388	Revenues and Benefits	1	Complaint about Lack of Support	Upheld	Apology sent	Normanton

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX C

Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
420	Revenues and Benefits	5	Housing & Council Tax Benefit	Upheld	Matter resolved.	Market Overton
102	Revenues and Benefits	4	Complainant notes lack of help regarding Council Tax	Upheld	Resolution offered to complainant.	Exton and Horn
172	Human Resources	5	Recruitment - communication	Not upheld	No further action necessary	Unknown
228	Finance	6	Insurance	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent	Cottesmore
229	Finance	5	Property Sale	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent	Uppingham
423	Finance		Unpaid Invoice Process	Partially upheld	Explanation provided to Customer	Unknown
People						
C94-15	Adult Social Care	10	Patient mishandling.	Not upheld	Explanation of procedure provided to customer.	Out of Rutland.
355/Adult	Adult Social Care	6	Elderly Care	Not upheld	None	Out of Rutland.
226/A	Adult Social Care	18	Adult Social Care	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Uppingham
317/Corp	Adult Social Care	Extension agreed	Social Worker Complaint	Not upheld	No action required	Uppingham
236/A	Adult Social Care	6	Adult Social Care - Rutland Care Village	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Out of Rutland.
C127-15	Adult Social Care	8	Long wait for replacement disabled toilet.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to customer. Meeting arranged. Customer has opted to progress to stage 2 of the process.	Oakham South East.
130	Adult Social Care	5	Referred to adult mental health, waiting for follow up meeting.	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to customer.	Oakham South West.
418/Adult	Adult Social Care	5	Adult Social Care Complaint	Upheld	Apolgies and service improvement made.	Greetham
169	Adult Social Care	9	Adult Social Care	Partially upheld	Concerns reported to Care Home	Out of Rutland.
387	Adult Social Care	5	Complaint against Social Worker	Not upheld	Explanation of perceived wrongdoing, no further action	Uppingham
205/A	Adult Social Care	10	Mother's Homecare charges/finance	Upheld	Payment to customer to correct calculation error	Ketton
117	Adult Social Care	10	Customer's mother left without care.	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to customer. Procedures revised.	Normanton.
90	Childrens Social Care	9	Unhappy with SEN's service.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to and meeting offered with customer.	Greetham
108	Childrens Social Care	36	Neglect of child.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to customer.	Out of Rutland.
123	Childrens Social Care	2	Carer ignored customer's wishes.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to customer. Customer opted to progress to Stage 2 of the	Greetham
411	Childrens Social Care	98	Complaint against Social Worker	Partially upheld	Apologies and service reviewed.	Oakham North West
131	Childrens Social Care	6	Problems with social services.	Not upheld	Explanation provided to customer. No formal letter as per customer's request.	Cottesmore.

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

APPENDIX C

Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
151	Childrens Social Care	Open	Unhappy that granddaughter has been removed from daughter.	Not upheld	Stage 2 meeting arranged and complaint resolved	
121	Childrens Social Care	3	No response to service request	Upheld	Explanation and apology provided to customer.	Out of Rutland.
158	Childrens Social care	18	Childrens Social care	Not upheld	No further action necessary	Oakham North West
168	Childrens Social Care	19	Child Minder	Not upheld	Investigation taken place - no action taken	Unknown
151	Childrens Social Care	22	Childrens Social Care (Child Protect & Safeguarding)	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer. Stage 2	Ryhall & Casterton
183	Childrens Social Care	11	Childrens Social Care (Lack of communication)	Not upheld	Letter to customer with explanation why information cannot be shared with Grandfather. Stage 2	Out of Rutland.
193	Childrens Social Care	4	Childrens Social Care - Change in Social Workers	Upheld	New social worker allocated & letter of apology sent	Oakham North East
194	Childrens Social Care	14	Complaint against Social Worker	Not upheld	New social worker allocated	Casterton & Ryhall
224	Childrens Social Care	21	Childrens Social Care - Safeguarding	Partially upheld	Explanation letter sent and notes added to file	Out of Rutland.
227	Childrens Social Care	3	Childrens Social Care - Complaint against process	Partially upheld	Letter of explanation sent to customer. Stage 2	Oakham North West
258/Corp	Childrens Social Care	2	No contact received from relevant Service Manager	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Uppingham
403	Childrens Social Care	19	Complaint against Social Worker	Partially upheld	Explanation of process and apology from Social Worker re conduct	Oakham North East
289/Corp	Childrens Social Care	30	Childrens Social Care - Complaint against a social Worker	Not upheld	Discussed issues with both Social workers as parctice issues	Out of Rutland.
290/Corp	Childrens Social Care	3	Childrens Social Care - Complaint against Social Worker	Upheld	The case has been audited and shortfalls identified in practice with actions taken.	Whissendine
295/Corp	Childrens Social Care	1	Complaint against Social Worker	Partially upheld	Discussion held with relevant member of staff	Unknown
321/Corp	Childrens Social Care	2	Noise from Jules	Upheld	Meeting with young people in Jan 2016	Oakham North West
322/Adult	Childrens Social Care	2	Constant changing Social Workers	Upheld	Apology given	Oakham North East
337/Corp	Childrens Social Care	1	Social Worker Complaint	Upheld	Social Worker briefed on process of discussing finance details with service users	Oakham North West
370	Childrens Social Care	27	Professional Misconduct	Not upheld	Explanation that no derogatory comments have been made and no telephone contact has taken place.	Out of Rutland.

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

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Ref	Category	No. of days to respond	Issue	Outcome (upheld)	Action Taken	Ward Area
371	Education	8	Sen Child not receiving Full Time Education	Partially upheld	Finalised the details of a placement in XXXXX. Suitable arrangements in place and hours of learning extended	Out of Rutland.
432	Education	10	SEN Department	Partially upheld	Apologies and service improvements identified.	Ketton
268/Corp	Education	25	SEN Provision at Oakham Cof E Primary School	Upheld	Referring to SEND Officer for contact	Oakham North East
298	Education	4	Child's Education	Not upheld	Matter resolved.	Out of Rutland.
238	Education	12	Special Educational Needs - member of staff conduct	Not upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Oakham North East
372	Education	20	Tone of letter from Social Worker	Upheld	Apology letter sent	Oakham North East
395	Jules	8	Damaged Hedge	Upheld	Process changed. Young people made aware of the need to disperse Jules at the end of a session. This will now be monitored	Oakham North East
409	Jules	1	Jules - Young People congregating outside property and the volume of the noise.	Upheld	Two Youth Workers dealt with swiftly and complainant happy with outcome.	Oakham North West
Cottesmore	Family Support	15	Family Support	Partially upheld	Complaint advised of process to follow and assured that review undertaken to avoid untimely delay.	Cottesmore
214/Corp	Fostering & Adoption	5	Customer Service from Duty	Upheld	Explanation/apology letter sent	Whissendine
384	Fostering & Adoption	2	Complaint about Foster Carer	Not upheld	Offer of meeting arrangement with Foster Carer to talk privately.	Oakham North East
207/Corp	Fostering & Adoption	3	Financial Package for house extension	Upheld	Explanation letter sent to customer	Out of Rutland.

Places	95
Resources	18
People	48
Total	161

Upheld	69
Not upheld	68
Partially upheld	21
Appeal Launched	2
Ongoing	1
Total	161

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21 July 2016

By email

Helen Briggs
Chief Executive
Rutland County Council

Dear Helen Briggs,

Annual Review Letter 2016

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2016.

The enclosed tables present the number of complaints and enquiries received and the decisions we made about your authority during the period. I hope that this information will prove helpful in assessing your authority's performance in handling complaints.

Last year we provided information on the number of complaints upheld and not upheld for the first time. In response to council feedback, this year we are providing additional information to focus the statistics more on the outcome from complaints rather than just the amounts received.

We provide a breakdown of the upheld investigations to show how they were remedied. This includes the number of cases where our recommendations remedied the fault and the number of cases where we decided your authority had offered a satisfactory remedy during the local complaints process. In these latter cases we provide reassurance that your authority had satisfactorily attempted to resolve the complaint before the person came to us. In addition, we provide a compliance rate for implementing our recommendations to remedy a fault.

I want to emphasise that these statistics comprise the data we hold, and may not necessarily align with the data your authority holds. For example, our numbers include enquiries from people we signpost back to the authority, but who may never contact you.

In line with usual practice, we are publishing our annual data for all authorities on our website, alongside an annual review of local government complaints. The aim of this is to be transparent and provide information that aids the scrutiny of local services.

Effective accountability for devolved authorities

Local government is going through perhaps some of the biggest changes since the LGO was set up more than 40 years ago. The creation of combined authorities and an increase in the number of elected mayors will hugely affect the way local services are held to account. We have already started working with the early combined authorities to help develop principles for effective and accessible complaints systems.

We have also reviewed how we structure our casework teams to provide insight across the emerging combined authority structures. Responding to council feedback, this included reconfirming the Assistant Ombudsman responsible for relationship management with each authority, which we recently communicated to Link Officers through distribution of our manual for working with the LGO.

Supporting local scrutiny

Our corporate strategy is based upon the twin pillars of remedying injustice and improving local public services. The numbers in our annual report demonstrate that we continue to improve the quality of our service in achieving swift redress.

To measure our progress against the objective to improve local services, in March we issued a survey to all councils. I was encouraged to find that 98% of respondents believed that our investigations have had an impact on improving local public services. I am confident that the continued publication of our decisions (alongside an improved facility to browse for them on our website), focus reports on key themes and the data in these annual review letters is helping the sector to learn from its mistakes and support better services for citizens.

The survey also demonstrated a significant proportion of councils are sharing the information we provide with elected members and scrutiny committees. I welcome this approach, and want to take this opportunity to encourage others to do so.

Complaint handling training

We recently refreshed our Effective Complaint Handling courses for local authorities and introduced a new course for independent care providers. We trained over 700 people last year and feedback shows a 96% increase in the number of participants who felt confident in dealing with complaints following the course. To find out more, visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Ombudsman reform

You will no doubt be aware that the government has announced the intention to produce draft legislation for the creation of a single ombudsman for public services in England. This is something we support, as it will provide the public with a clearer route to redress in an increasingly complex environment of public service delivery.

We will continue to support government in the realisation of the public service ombudsman, and are advising on the importance of maintaining our 40 years plus experience of working with local government and our understanding its unique accountability structures.

This will also be the last time I write with your annual review. My seven-year term of office as Local Government Ombudsman comes to an end in January 2017. The LGO has gone through extensive change since I took up post in 2010, becoming a much leaner and more focused organisation, and I am confident that it is well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Local Authority Report: Rutland County Council
For the Period Ending: 31/03/2016

For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our website:

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/interpreting-local-authority-statistics>

Complaints and enquiries received

Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and Other Services	Education and Children's Services	Environment Services	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
1	2	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	10

Decisions made

				Detailed Investigations			
Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	Total
1	0	1	6	1	0	0%	9

Notes

Our uphold rate is calculated in relation to the total number of detailed investigations.

The number of remedied complaints may not equal the number of upheld complaints. This is because, while we may uphold a complaint because we find fault, we may not always find grounds to say that fault caused injustice that ought to be remedied.

The compliance rate is the proportion of remedied complaints where our recommendations are believed to have been implemented.

Complaints Remedied

by LGO	Satisfactorily by Authority before LGO Involvement	Compliance Rate
0	0	100%

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RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

10 November 2016

POVERTY SCRUTINY PROJECT

Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr Oliver Helmsley, Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport & Recreation, Tourism and Housing	
Contact Officer(s):	Debbie Mogg, Director for Resources	Tel: 01572 758358 dmogg@rutland.gov.uk
	Saverio Della Rocca, Assistant Director - Finance	Tel: 01572 758159 sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Considers the topics and related issues/questions covered in this report;
2. Identifies any further information or work it may wish to undertake;
3. Authorises the Chair to produce a written report of findings to feed back into the overall project.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Scrutiny Commission has agreed to undertake a review of Poverty in Rutland. The project objectives are:

- To develop an agreed definition(s) of Poverty in Rutland;
- To develop a Council policy in the form of a White Paper to be approved by Full Council that will outline for Rutland how the Council will act to positively impact on poverty within the County.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Further to the initial workshop attended by Members on 13 September 2016, a list of areas was highlighted for further investigation by individual Scrutiny Panels. The following areas were identified for the Resources Scrutiny Panel to take forward:

- Review the crisis fund
- Financial awareness

This report provides some information in relation to those areas.

2.2 Scrutiny Commission have agreed the following timetable for this review:

Stage	Panel	Date
All member workshop		13 th September 2016
Panel work to develop Green Paper	Adults	22 nd September and 1 st December 2016
	Children's	17 th November 2016 and 23 rd February 2017
	Places	24 th November 2016 and 9 th February 2017
	Resources	10 th November 2016 and 16 th February 2017
Green paper to Cabinet	N/R	21 st March 2017
Panel work on White Paper	Adults	6 th April 2017
	Children's	4 th May 2017
	Places	20 th April 2017
	Resources	27 th April 2017
White Paper to Cabinet	N/R	16 th May 2017
White Paper to Council	N/R	June Council

2.3 Further to a meeting with the Chair of the Resources Scrutiny Panel, it was agreed that this Panel would focus on a number of key areas:

- The Crisis Fund – how it works, the support the Council offers and how many people use it;
- Financial awareness – how the Council supports those who may need financial advice including the experience of Citizens Advice Bureau, one of the Council's key partners in this area;
- Debt recovery – the Council's approach and its experience of working with those individuals in arrears.

2.4 To facilitate a discussion of each area, three short papers have been produced which are included as appendices to this report. The papers are not exhaustive but provide information to facilitate a discussion in each area. To assist the

discussion, officers have highlighted some questions the Panel may wish to consider.

- 2.5 Further to the outcome of this meeting the Chair of the Panel will report back to the working group to consider next steps but this will be confirmed at the meeting.

3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report gives further information requested by the initial Poverty project workshop.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 There are no additional papers.

5 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A – Crisis Fund
- 5.2 Appendix B – Financial awareness
- 5.3 Appendix C – Debt recovery

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

Appendix A. Crisis Fund

1. Background

The Government abolished the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) administered Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants from 1 April 2013 and all Councils with County Council functions were given funding to develop a local scheme. The Council approved the current scheme on 26th February 2013 (Report 56/2013) and made some amendments to it in January 2015 (Report 1/2015).

This papers sets out the details of the scheme, how it works and who accesses it.

2. Objectives of the scheme

Crisis support is intended to provide financial support to meet or help to meet a need that unless provided would severely disadvantage the applicant or a member of their household.

Crisis support can also provide emergency financial support where the applicant or a member of their household would suffer severe disadvantage if their immediate needs are not met.

Anyone can apply for support but the policy does highlight that people on certain benefits detailed below, may be more likely to apply due to their limited income:

- Income Support;
- Job Seekers Allowance;
- Pension Credit;
- Employment and Support Allowance; and
- Universal Credit

Equally, anyone from a household on a low income that would suffer severely health and/or safety problems if remedial support were not provided can also apply.

3. What support is available?

The Council offers either a cash award of up to £40.00 (cash is rarely awarded) or other support which can include:

- Essential items when setting up a new home;
- Food bank vouchers;
- Clothing and footwear;
- Bedding Vouchers;
- Crockery;

- Travel expenses when moving home;
- Rent in advance if not met from another fund;
- Removal expenses;
- Domestic appliances;
- Repairs to essential items; and
- State benefits not being paid into their bank account when expected causing severe financial hardship.

Transport or travel costs generally will not be met. But there may be circumstances where the need to travel is a crisis. In some circumstances the award will be required to be repaid, an invoice will be issued to facilitate this. E.g. benefit delays.

The Council may refer the applicant to a partner organisation if it is appropriate to do so. The organisation may assist with procurement of the item or provide the item/s. The following organisations are included:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Voluntary Action Rutland;
- Leicestershire Charity Link;
- Melton Furniture Project;
- Rutland Grants;
- North Luffenham Village Trust;
- Rutland Community Agents;
- The Family Fund; and
- Clockwise Credit Union.

4. How do individuals access the scheme?

The Council's scheme has been published on our website, leaflets are available at customer services, stakeholders and third sector agencies have been made aware of the scheme and how applications can be made. In the early days of the scheme JobCentre Plus staff distributed our leaflets and signposted Rutland residents to our scheme.

Applications can be made by completing a paper form which is available online, at the local Rutland Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) office or at the council offices. Applications must be made using an application form as specified.

Applications will only be accepted from people living in Rutland and registered to pay Council Tax or detailed as a member of that household as a resident. All applications may be made to CAB, a local parish or town contact or directly to Rutland County Council. CAB

and the local parish contact will ensure the application is fully completed and obtain any evidence required to support the application.

A senior officer within the Revenues & Benefits Team will assess the application, and in some cases the officer may request further information i.e. a mini statement detailing the latest banking transactions.

5. How we prioritise who receives support?

Officers assess each application on its own merits against the criteria. Officers take the following factors into account:

- the nature of the crisis and the reason for it;
- the amount of support needed to remedy the situation;
- household disabilities and vulnerability;
- the level of risk to the person or their family if support isn't given;
- what other support is available; and
- the household income and expenditure.

Examples of an application that has been approved and one that has been rejected.

Mrs West is a lone parent with two children aged 3 and 5. Mrs West checked her bank account and her regular payment of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) has not been paid as the DWP had not received her fit to work note yet. It is Friday morning and Mrs West has no money in her account and needs to buy food and top up her fuel card until Monday morning, when the DWP have assured her that her ESA payment will be in her account. Mrs West is awarded a food bank voucher and £10.00 for electricity as her family would suffer severe hardship if the support were not provided. The crisis was resolved completely.

Mr Jackson is single with no children. He had not received his first payment of Job Seekers Allowance as expected on Thursday. Officers contacted the DWP and were advised that his first payment would be in his bank account the following day on Friday. A bank account mini statement showed that Mr Jackson had £20.00 in his account. Officers did not make an award to Mr Jackson as he has some money available for his immediate needs and his benefit payment from the DWP was imminent.

6. What is the overall budget?

The budget is set at £25k. This is the amount that was originally transferred to us by the DWP. The amount spent against the budget is shown below. The Council also has a welfare reserve that can be used to top up the budget if required.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Budget	£23,000	£25,000	£25,000
Actual/Forecast	£14,300	£12,400	£14,500*

* This amount includes a grant of £5,200 to Melton Furniture Project.

7. Facts and figures

The tables below provide some detail of how many claims we receive, how many are successful, and where claimants are located (the ward). The Council has also tried to classify claimants into various categories to get a view on the source of claims. More work is needed in this area.

The following table details the number of applications received and the decisions made.

Year	Applications received	Applications awarded	Applications refused or referred
2014/15	324	207	117
2015/16	205	142	63
2016/17 (to date)	109	94	15

The following table details the successful applications for 2015/16 and to date for 2016/17 and the ward area that the applicant resides in.

Ward	Applications awarded 2015/16	%	Applications awarded 2016/17 (to date)	%
Braunston and Belton	3	2.1%	0	0
Cottesmore	3	2.1%	0	0
Exton	0	0	1	1.1%
Greetham	2	1.4%	2	2.1%
Ketton	3	2.1%	1	1.1%
Langham	5	3.5%	4	4.3%
Lyddington	1	0.7%	0	0
Martinsthorpe	0	0	1	1.1%
Normanton	4	2.8%	2	2.1%
Oakham North East	23	16.3%	18	19.1%
Oakham North West	33	23.3%	34	36.2%
Oakham South East	7	4.9%	0	0
Oakham South West	8	5.6%	7	7.4%
Ryhall and Casterton	2	1.4%	3	3.2%
Uppingham	26	18.3%	16	17%
Whissendine	2	1.4%	0	0
Homeless (connection to Rutland)	20	14.1%	5	5.3%
Total	142	100%	94	100%

The following table details the type of item awarded to date for 2016/17. In some cases people are awarded multiple items e.g. a food bank voucher and fuel for cooking/heating.

Item	Number awarded
Bedding	1
Clothing	2
Cooker	1
Food – supermarket voucher	4
Food – food bank voucher	41
Food – food parcel (supplied to RCC)	21
Fridge	1
Fuel for cooking/heating	21
Fuel for vehicle	1
Furniture package (Melton Furniture project)	5
Public transport	4
Moving expenses	3
Toiletries	1
Washing machine	1
Other living expenses	14
TOTAL	121

The following table details the type of event giving rise to the award to date for 2016/17.

Event	Class of award
Leaving care	4
Daily living expenses	82
Disaster i.e. fire/flooding	1
Fleeing domestic abuse	1
Emergency travel costs	2
Moving home	4
TOTAL	94

In summary the following observations have been made by officers:

- Crisis fund awards provide a quick fix for immediate issues rather than a long term solution.
- The award system focuses more on the crisis itself and an immediate solution rather than analysing the applicants overall situation, lifestyle and other issues that maybe contributing to their need for support.
- A number of people submit repeat applications for the same or similar crisis situations even though the fund is limited to 3 awards per financial year.
- Most awards are not subject to any type of review or follow up to see if the award achieved its purpose or if refused what steps the applicant took to alleviate the crisis.

8. Possible questions

What further information do Members need?

What do Members think of the current scheme?

Could our £25k be used differently?

What information could we collect that might help?

Appendix B. Financial awareness

1. Background

The Council deals with many customers and residents across a wide range of services. During its work, it may become aware that individuals are experiencing financial difficulties or hardship and need help.

This paper sets out areas where the Council interacts with customers, where it might learn about a customer with financial issues and what type of support is available.

2. Where might we learn about financial difficulties and how we respond?

Area	How and why we may become aware of issues	How we respond
Crisis loans	We get applications for support (see Appendix A) from those claiming hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct award of cash or support • Referral to partner • Support through another Council service (e.g. housing) • Benefits health check
Community Care Finance	We undertake financial assessments to assess how much people can afford to contribute to their care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct support • Referral to partner • Benefits health check
Housing	We receive enquiries from individuals who are homeless or have a housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Support • Referral to partner
Debt recovery	We pursue council debt and deal with customers who say they cannot pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct support • Referral to partner • Local Council Tax Support
Social care	We deal with individuals who need care and may be at risk of financial abuse. During discussions and assessments it may become apparent that individuals have financial problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial safeguarding alert • Referral to Advocacy services • Support through another Council service e.g. adult social care • Benefit Health check • Application for appointeeship (management of a person's benefit income) • Application for deputyship (management of a person's property and finances)
Customer Services	We deal with people at first point of contact who can't pay their bill or people who want to claim or have a query about benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to relevant section • Referral to partner • Direct support i.e. help with completion of forms

Benefits	We get applications and queries for Housing Benefit, Local Council Tax Support and Discretionary Hardship Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct award of Benefit • Referral to partner • Support through another council service (e.g. housing)
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Outside of individual service areas, the Council has a welfare reform group comprising representatives from each Directorate, Spire Homes, CAB and DWP. The Group was created in 2013 to develop our understanding of welfare reforms and how this will affect our population and to implement and monitor the crisis fund. The group has not met recently. However a meeting is due to be scheduled shortly to enable the DWP representative to provide an update on the progression of Universal Credit.

The Council is developing a new website which will include a new page entitled 'Help with money' this page can be developed to provide information about support that is available locally.

3. What we have learnt?

In summary the following observations have been made by officers:

- Many people with financial difficulties don't seek help until they are at crisis point;
- People do not know what help is available;
- Many people don't/can't put aside money for emergencies;
- People do not understand how to prioritise debt;
- Many people don't seek help before they get to us;
- Many people in debt don't understand their finances or don't budget; and
- We often advise people to seek help but we don't know if they act on this advice.

4. What other support is available to individuals outside the Council?

To support our own services but also to provide wider support to the community, the Council has a contract with CAB which requires CAB to commit to providing quality information and advice to address housing, homelessness, debt and welfare issues.

Under this remit CAB provides:

- General advice on a wide range of issues
- Welfare rights advice for areas including Working and Child Tax Credits, Employment and Support Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Pension Credit etc.

- Housing related advice including rent and mortgage arrears, threat of homelessness, neighbour issues, overpaid housing benefit queries etc.

Rutland CAB has recently produced a 'Report on Poverty in Rutland'. The last report prior to this was undertaken in 2008.

The report looks at:

- the statistical data available;
- income levels of people living in Rutland;
- housing, transport and other costs; and
- other important factors that set the scene of what poverty is in Rutland.

The report does acknowledge that it is difficult to use statistical data for a rural population and states that local knowledge is perhaps a more useful measure. With this in mind the report illustrates points using real case studies of people who have been supported by CAB.

Other support services include:

Spire Homes; floating support for vulnerable people, help with managing rent arrears, sustaining tenancies, assistive technology.

The Bridge; tailored support for vulnerable people to help people gain skills and knowledge to manage their own home.

Rutland Community Agents; information and advice for local people.

Money Advice Service; free and impartial advice with online tools and calculators.

Society of Later Life Advisers; independent financial advice for older people.

5. What do other Councils do?

This is not an area that the Council has looked into in detail but it is aware of various initiatives being undertaken:

- Melton Borough Council promote their 'me and my learning' service. Their approach is to encourage people to upgrade their skills to improve their chances of gaining employment to reduce their dependency on benefits. In some cases officers are able to make accessing this service a condition of an award for other discretionary financial support.
- North Warwickshire Borough Council has a useful section on their website called 'help with money and debt' where a range of support services and their links are provided.
https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/info/20016/council_housing_and_garages/1297/help_with_money_and_debt/2

6. Issues/questions

Are we doing enough to help people with their finances?

Can we do more?

Should the remit of the Welfare reform group be refreshed to consider welfare benefits in a wider context?

Appendix C. Debt recovery

1. Background

The Council collects a substantial amount of income for council tax (c£21m) and other services such as social care.

Whilst the Council has a very good track record of collecting income, individuals do not always pay upon receiving a bill or an invoice for various reasons. If this happens then the Council will try to recover the debt. This paper sets out how this process works and some of the issues faced.

2. Recovery process

The debt recovery process for council tax and non-domestic rates is governed by regulations. The process is described in a leaflet called "A Guide to paying Council tax". The leaflet (attached) covers:

- What happens if people do not pay;
- What procedures are followed;
- What options are available to people; and
- Where people can get support.

<http://www.rutland.gov.uk/pdf/CT%20recovery%20leaflet%202014-15%20.pdf>

For all types of debt, the Council has a corporate debt policy. The table below details the ultimate enforcement action that can be taken across a range of debts. Recovery action tends to incur additional fees which can add to a person's indebtedness.

Priority	Debt Type	Ultimate enforcement action
1	Rent arrears	Eviction
1	Mortgage arrears	Repossession
2	Council Tax	Enforcement agent, bankruptcy, imprisonment
3	Business Rates	Enforcement agent, insolvency, imprisonment
3	Other secured loans	Repossession or imprisonment
3	Income tax and VAT	Bankruptcy or Imprisonment
4	Maintenance/child support	Imprisonment
4	Fines or compensation	Imprisonment
4	County Court Judgements (CCJ)	Enforcement agent, bankruptcy

Priority	Debt Type	Ultimate enforcement action
5	Fuel/water rates	Disconnection, Enforcement agent
5	Hire Purchase	Repossession of item
5	Benefit Overpayment	Ongoing deductions or CCJ
5	Penalty Charge Notices	Enforcement agent
5	Other Council Debts	CCJ

Signposting to other agencies is an important part of debt collection. Many organisations offer free confidential advice to customers to help them to prioritise their debt and often arrange payment plans with their creditors. Different agencies offer varying levels of support. Some agencies are detailed below:

- Citizens Advice Bureau;
- The National Debt Helpline;
- The Money Advice Service;
- Business Debt Line; and
- Age UK.

3. Facts and figures

The follow table details the numbers of notices issued at each stage of the recovery process for 2015/16 for council tax and business rates. The recovery cycle continues throughout the financial year. I.e. Reminder Notices are issued every month through the year; officers attend court to obtain Liability Orders once every month.

Stage	Council Tax for 2015/16	Business Rates for 2015/16
Reminder Notice	3,922	268
Final Notice	1,373	95
Summons	955	49
Liability Order obtained at Magistrates Court	686	35
Accounts referred to bailiffs for collection	259	9
Arrears outstanding for 2015/16 at 31/03/2016	£261,458.44	£88,368.58

4. What we find

In summary the following observations have been made by officers:

- People with debt are not always in financial difficulties;
- People are reluctant to contact the Council or avoid our calls;
- People often ignore the early letters and miss opportunities to avoid incurring fees later on;
- People often agree to payment arrangements that they can afford at the time and then an unexpected cost comes along that means they don't keep to the arrangement so they stop paying altogether;
- Sending debts to bailiffs works as lots of people pay but for some people it just makes things worse as more fees are added so people end up paying a lot more than their original debt; and
- Housing Benefit overpayment debt will get more difficult to collect and it is growing as people don't report their change in circumstances in a timely way and people are often on low incomes and struggle to pay their overpayment back.
- Further welfare reform changes such as the roll out of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap may impact on household budgets.

5. How we help/challenges

Where we identify someone in financial difficulty, we have seen that what works best is:

- Signposting people to seek help with budgeting and managing their debts at an early stage;
- Setting up an arrangement for a low amount for a short period of time to enable people to have some breathing space to sort out their finances;
- Building rapport with people so they feel comfortable talking to us about their debt;
- Encouraging people to contact us if they can't make a payment that they agreed to make; and
- People with mental health illnesses often find it difficult to talk about their financial problems so empathy and understanding from skilled officers is essential.

Recovering debt is time consuming, we are not resourced to do something bespoke but we would like to take a more customer centred approach.

6. Issues/questions

Should we make seeking help with debts a condition of entering into a payment arrangement?

Should we review our corporate debt policy?

What further information might be needed?

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