

**TO:- Standards and Resources Committee**

Councillor Diane Holmes , Councillor Philip Davis , Councillor Penny Allen , Councillor Barry Bond M.B.E. ,  
Councillor John Brindle , Councillor Gary Burnett , Councillor Mike Davies , Councillor Sue Duncan , Councillor  
Dr Paul Harrison M.B.E. , Councillor Dan Kinsey B.E.M , Councillor Robert Reade , Councillor Sue Szalapski

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Standards and Resources Committee will be held as detailed below for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Date: Thursday, 23 November 2023

Time: 14:30

Venue: Council Chamber, Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX



D. Heywood  
Chief Executive

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**A G E N D A**

**Part I – Public Session**

- |          |  |                |
|----------|--|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Minutes</b><br>To approve the minutes of the Standards and Resources meeting of 14 September 2023.      | <b>1 - 2</b>   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Apologies</b><br><br>To receive any apologies for non-attendance.                                       |                |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br><br>To receive any declarations of interest.                            |                |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Corporate Health and Safety Policy</b><br>Report of the Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager | <b>3 - 30</b>  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Elections Act Update</b><br>Report of the Corporate Support Team Manager                                | <b>31 - 34</b> |

<b>6</b>	Review of Parliamentary Polling Places and Polling Stations 2023/24 Report of the Performance and Customer Insight Officer	<b>35 - 46</b>
<b>7</b>	Customer Feedback Policy Report of the Corporate Policy Manager	<b>47 - 78</b>
<b>8</b>	Report on Work Programme/Complaints Report of Monitoring Officer (Corporate Director of Governance)	<b>79 - 86</b>

#### **RECORDING**

**Please note that this meeting will be recorded.**

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS**

Spare paper copies of committee agenda and reports are no longer available. Therefore should any member of the public wish to view the agenda or report(s) for this meeting, please go to [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/council-democracy).

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards and Resources Committee** South Staffordshire Council held in the Council Chamber Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX on Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 14:30

**Present:-**

Councillor Penny Allen, Councillor John Brindle, Councillor Gary Burnett, Councillor Mike Davies, Councillor Philip Davis, Keith Elder, Lisa Emery, Councillor Dr Paul Harrison , Councillor Dan Kinsey, Councillor Robert Reade, Mary Roberts, Councillor Sue Szalapski, Richard Taylor

7      **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Resources Committee held on 8 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

8      **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Bond MBE, S Duncan, and D Holmes.

9      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

10     **OUTCOME OF THE 2023 COMBINED LOCAL ELECTIONS**

**RESOLVED:** That the outcomes of the 2023 Combined Local Elections are noted.

11     **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER**

**RESOLVED:** That the Standards and Resources Committee notes the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter.

12     **DATA PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE**

**RESOLVED:** That Members approve the policy attached as Appendix 1.

13     **REPORT ON WORK PROGRAMME/COMPLAINTS**

**RESOLVED:** That the Standards and Resources Committee notes the contents of the update on Code of Conduct and Complaint Matters.

The Meeting ended at: 15:20

**CHAIRMAN**



**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

**CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY - REPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & LICENSING TEAM MANAGER**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR RITA HESELTINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR REGULATORY SERVICES.**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

Every 3 years the Council reviews its Corporate Health and Safety Policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose considering organisational and legislative changes.

The existing policy has been reviewed and has been updated to reflect the current organisational structure. There were no updates required in respect of any legislative changes.

The revised policy can be found in Appendix 1.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	A Safe and Sustainable District
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	No significant changes to the policy so no implications that have not been considered previously.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	Report to Standards and Resources Committee	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	November 2023	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	Fulfilling the Council's obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 is met from within existing budgets. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has common law and statutory duties relating to the health and safety of its employees, contractors and members of the public under the

		Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, its related regulations and approved codes of practice.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>Risk of non-compliance with Health and Safety legislation detailed in corporate risk register.</p> <p>Opportunity to have positive impact on employees health and wellbeing</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

Health and safety is about preventing people from being harmed by work or becoming ill through work. As an authority we have both a legal and moral duty towards our own employees, contractors and members of the public.

The Council, as an employer, has a legal duty to prepare a written statement of general policy with respect to the health and safety of employees and the organisation and arrangements in place to implement the policy.

The Council also has a duty to review and revise the policy as often as is necessary and to bring the revised policy to the notice of all employees.

A Health and Safety area is maintained on the Core where all documents, policies and risk assessments are available to employees.

Approval of the policy rests with the Lead Cabinet Member but views of members of the Committee are sought before the revised policy is finalised.

#### **Policy Review**

The Corporate Health and Safety Policy sets out our commitment to health and safety, including a statement regarding responsibilities at different levels. The policy has been reviewed to take into account changes in the structure of the council, and sets out responsibilities as follows:

- Cabinet and CLT - Policy makers
- Assistant Directors - Planners
- Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers Implementers

The review also incorporates changes to the Health and Safety Steering Group arrangements which it is proposed will now operate as an Operational Group made up of Team Managers from services across the Council and representatives from relevant support services e.g.

finance and will be chaired by the Assistant Team Manager, Environmental Health and Licensing, meeting on a monthly basis.

It is proposed that a Strategic Steering Group, made up of Elected Members, relevant CLT/ELT members and chaired by the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager will be formed to oversee the work of the Operational Group via reports presented on a quarterly basis.

**4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

None Identified

**5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**7. APPENDICES**

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That Members note amendments and provide comments on the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy at Appendix 1.

Report prepared by: Jenny Rhodes (Environmental Health Protection and Licensing Team Manager)







**South Staffordshire Council**

# **Corporate Health and Safety Policy**

July 2023



[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## POLICY APPROVAL, REVIEW AND AMENDMENT LOG

<b>Title</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Policy
<b>Original Issue:</b>	October 2016
<b>Date of Review:</b>	June 2023
<b>Reason for review:</b>	Update
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Environmental Health & Licensing Team Manager
<b>Responsible Committee Group:</b>	Health & Safety Steering Group
<b>Consultation with and date:</b>	CLT, July 2023

Version	Type of Change	Date	Description of Change
1		October 2018	Revised Policy Draft
2	Review and revise	May 2022	Review of structure, added: review log, introduction, organisation chart, and names of responsible roles.
3	Review and update	June 2023	Review and update of structure and titles of responsible roles.

**Next Review Due: July 2026**

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

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# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council will risk assess its activities, provide suitable competency-based training wherever it is necessary, and encourage all employees contractors and volunteers to develop and support a positive safety culture, to ensure health and safety standards are maintained and improved.

**The Corporate Health and Safety Policy will consist of four parts:**

<b>1. The Statement</b>	The Chief Executive's declaration of intent on behalf of South Staffordshire Council.
<b>2. Organisation</b>	The management structure and the defining roles and responsibilities within the organisation.
<b>3. Arrangements</b>	The Corporate procedures and systems necessary for implementing the Policy.
<b>4. Monitoring</b>	The system for auditing the effectiveness of the arrangements and for reviewing and reporting on health and safety performance.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

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The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes a statutory duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. This general duty also extends towards ensuring the health and safety of others that may be affected by their work activities.

South Staffordshire Council will take appropriate action to comply with these duties and all other duties contained within other applicable health and safety legislation.

The Council will, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Ensure that places of work and the working environment provided for all its employees are safe and without risks to health.
- Provide safe access to and egress from all workplaces.
- Provide and maintain any work equipment, machinery or plant so that it is safe and without risks to health.
- Ensure that any articles and substances for use at work are handled, stored, transported and used in a manner which is safe and without risks to health.
- Provide, maintain and replace as necessary any required personal protective equipment.
- Provide and maintain suitable and adequate welfare facilities for employees.
- Provide suitable and adequate health and safety training and ensure that employees are, where necessary, adequately supervised.
- Ensure that risk assessments are conducted, monitored and reviewed. Where specific risks are identified, safe systems of work will be provided and maintained to control such risks.
- Provide and monitor safe systems of work for individual activities in order to maintain required standards.
- Provide health surveillance for employees as appropriate (for example audiometric assessment).
- Develop and provide information for employees on safe working practices.
- Conduct its work activities so as not to endanger the health, safety and welfare of other people who may be affected.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also places a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own and others' safety, both through their acts and omissions, and to co-operate with the Council in its efforts to comply with health and safety legislation.

All employees should therefore exercise due care and attention and observe any Regulations, Approved Codes of Practice or Guidance relevant to their work.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required, and may be modified to meet new regulations, information from performance audits or changing circumstances within the council. This Policy has been approved by the Chief Executive of the Council and the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services.

Signed .....

Date:

Mr. Dave Heywood - Chief Executive

Signed .....

Date:

Councillor Roger Lees – Leader



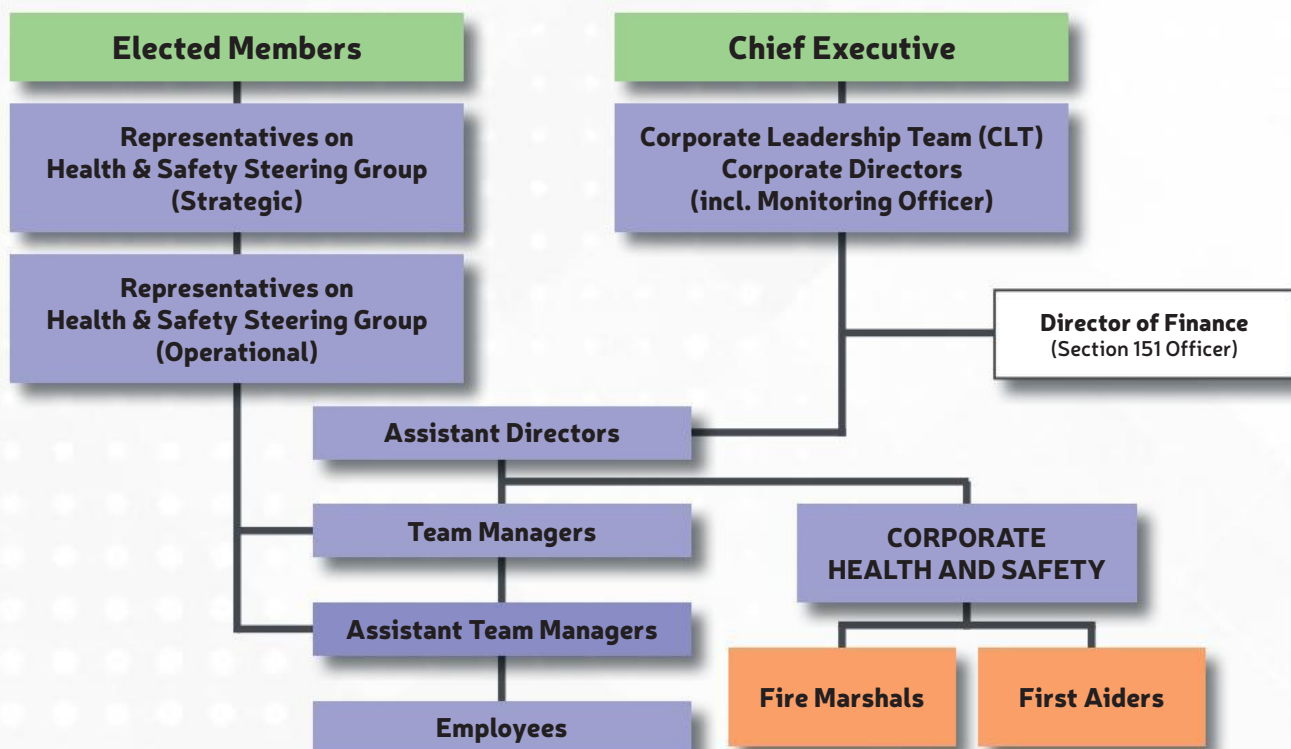
# Corporate Health and Safety Policy



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 2. ORGANISATION

### Health and Safety Organisation Chart



### 2.1 Individual responsibilities

All employees have a legal responsibility to meet the statutory requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. At all levels of the organisation, our people will be:

- Responsible for the safety and wellbeing of themselves, those people they manage and the people they work for.
- Aware of their responsibilities for health and safety issues and their effects on people within the activities they control.

The Chief Executive has nominated the Corporate Leadership Team (Corporate Directors), as having responsibility for health and safety. The Leader of the Council and Members of the Cabinet will monitor the operation of this policy to encourage and strive for continued improvement in health and safety performance.



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 2.2 Members of the Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)

Members of the Cabinet and CLT as policy makers develop and are responsible for policy at a strategic level. They maintain, develop, and promote health and safety. Policy makers also make sure that we take account of health and safety matters when they make organisational decisions.

Members of the Cabinet and CLT have a specific responsibility to ensure the role of health and safety planners is carried out within their areas.

Health and safety policy makers will develop, preserve and maintain our health and safety management system by:

- Identifying a framework for planning, measuring performance and reviewing performance.
- Developing strategies to put policy into practice and including these in general business activity.
- Making sure that responsibilities for safety, health and welfare are properly delegated, understood and carried out.
- Ensuring that the necessary risk assessments are carried out and updated as per section 3.1 of this policy.
- Ensuring that training needs are addressed.
- Agreeing plans for improvement and reviewing the progress of the corporate health and safety improvement/action plan.
- Making sure that there is consultation between safety representatives and management teams.
- Making sure that standards are clearly defined, to make sure we act within the law and promote best health and safety practice.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.3 Assistant Directors

Assistant Directors develop detailed local arrangements and procedures to achieve our corporate aims. They also contribute to health and safety with management arrangements for identifying, eliminating and controlling hazards and risks within their area of responsibility.

Assistant Directors are responsible for the following duties and ensuring the duties of implementers are carried out. In some cases, Team Managers / Assistant Team Managers may deputise for Assistant Directors.

Assistant Directors will plan, develop, and maintain our health and safety management system by:

- Making sure that health and safety responsibilities are properly delegated, understood and carried out by employees within their service areas.
- Inform Members of Cabinet and CLT of what resources (including financial) are needed to meet their service area's obligations for health and safety matters, including providing equipment, clothing and training.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

- Setting up local management arrangements, risk-assessment programs, risk-control systems, workplace precautions and associated performance standards, to make sure that they are monitored, reviewed and updated regularly and brought to the attention of employees.
- Supporting the Members of the Cabinet and CLT in promoting health and safety.
- Asking for advice from the Corporate Health and Safety Team, and the Team Manager for the Environmental Health and Licensing on relevant health and safety matters.
- Monitoring how effectively their teams' local arrangements are put into practice, making sure it reflects the aims of this policy.
- When making decisions on behalf of their teams, making sure that any relevant health, safety and welfare issues are dealt with fully.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.4 Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers

Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers make sure that the workplace precautions and systems for controlling risk are in place and are put into practice. All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers/ Supervisors are responsible for managing health and safety in their area of responsibility - support is available from the Corporate Health and Safety Team. Team Managers and Assistant Managers / supervisors will have responsibility to:

- Put identified service specific action plans e.g. Fire Risk Assessments into practice within the general limits of their authority.
- Identify service specific training needs and determine the training needs of their staff and advise HR Manager and the Corporate Health and Safety Team of any new training needs arising from risk assessments or job role.
- Ensure that My Reviews (PDRs) are undertaken in line with the Corporate Guidance and that it is used to set and measure performance against health and safety targets and objectives (where these are appropriate for the job description of the employee concerned) and identify any specific health and safety training needs.
- Ensure that their staff attend relevant courses.
- Ensure training records are kept for training on iTrent.
- Make sure that all employees under their control are familiar with any health and safety procedures or working practices.
- Set up and maintain within their service area safe, healthy, working conditions.
- Show the commitment and motivation to achieve safe working attitudes and actions.
- Reduce risk as far as possible through risk assessment, taking precautions to eliminate hazards, reduce risks or protect other people where necessary.
- Include those working in the role to participate in putting together work-related risk assessments.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

- Make sure that new, reviewed or changed processes, equipment and services are assessed for risks (preferably before they are put into practice) and provision of appropriate training is provided and staff made aware of relevant assessments.
- Make sure that procedures and training programs are set up and maintained for all employees.
- Make sure that job training is carried out by competent people.
- Investigate (in conjunction with the Corporate Health and Safety Team) investigation of all accidents and incidents under the service area's control to eliminate or control basic causes (this should help prevent them happening again). (Refer to the Accident and Incident Policy).
- Make sure that contractors' and other people's activities (for example, employees from other service areas) in their areas of responsibility are monitored.
- Make sure that all employees, including safety representatives, are competent to carry out their responsibilities, and encourage them to work with managers to promote an attitude of safe working across the Council.
- Regularly discuss health and safety issues affecting their teams, e.g., via regular team meetings.
- Ensure health and safety responsibilities are included in all employee contracts and job descriptions appropriate to individual roles.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.5 Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager

Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager, will act as the competent person for the organisation supported by the Corporate Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer), and Assistant Director (Community Services), and will:

- Provide professional advice in the management and implementation of the principles of health and safety throughout the Council.
- Review new safety legislation or changes in existing legislation and liaise with the Health and Safety Steering Group within the Council regarding the interpretation of safety legislation and advise on action required to comply with the legislation.
- Assist with, monitor and develop the Council health and safety policy by consulting with managers and safety representatives.
- Where necessary, stop any work activities where there is a serious and imminent risk of injury, and set appropriate health and safety management standards to be followed.
- Advise on appropriate health and safety training for managers, supervisors or other employees as necessary.
- Work closely with the Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers and report to their line managers on matters concerning health and safety.
- Assist in the investigation of notifiable accidents or dangerous occurrences and recommend means of preventing recurrence.
- Ensure that formal reporting of notifiable accidents takes place.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

- Assess accident trends and review overall safety performance.
- Develop/review and update corporate risk assessments.
- Undertake a Corporate training needs analysis for Health and Safety Training, e.g., Fire safety, First Aid, Accident reporting.
- Chair the Health and Safety Steering Group.
- Ensure that the Health and Safety pages of the intranet are kept up to date.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.5.1 Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Corporate Health & Safety Team will, in conjunction with the Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager, provide professional advice in the management and implementation of the principles of health and safety throughout the Council. The Corporate Health and Safety Team will:

- Receive and review information regarding new safety legislation or changes in existing legislation and liaise with others within the Council regarding the interpretation of safety legislation and the action required to comply with the legislation.
- Assist with, monitor and develop the Council health and safety policy by consulting with managers and safety representatives.
- Where necessary, stop any work activities where there is a serious and imminent risk of injury, and set appropriate health and safety management standards to be followed.
- Advise on appropriate health and safety training for Team Managers, Assistant Team Manager/ Supervisors or other employees, as necessary.
- Work closely with Team Managers and report to their line managers on matters concerning health and safety.
- Report as necessary to the Corporate Health & Safety Steering Group or Corporate Leadership Team, CLT (or both) on health and safety matters.
- Assist in the investigation of notifiable accidents or dangerous occurrences and recommend means of preventing recurrence.
- Formally report notifiable accidents.
- Assess accident trends and review overall safety performance.
- Develop/review and update corporate risk assessments.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.6 Safety Representatives

Employee health and safety representatives, whether appointed by the trade union or from employee groups, play a vital role in the communication and promotion of health and safety. They consult with management on safety issues raised by employees. The council acknowledges that for the Health and Safety Policy to be effective it requires the involvement and co-operation of employees. It will:



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

- Co-operate fully in the appointment of Safety Representatives by recognised trade unions and those employees that are not members of a trade union.
- Provide them, where necessary, with sufficient facilities and training to carry out their functions.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

## 2.7 Employees

All employees have a vital role to play in effective health and safety management. and are crucial to maintaining and improving health and safety standards, therefore all employees will:

- Take reasonable care for their health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by what they do or what they omit to do (or neglect to do) while at work.
- Co-operate to meet any health and safety legal duty or need.
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare (for example, protective clothing, first-aid equipment, fire safety equipment, machinery guards, signage etc.).
- Exercise their duty to other people to protect their safety, and make sure that they don't use any method of work that could be dangerous to themselves or members of the public.
- Tell their line manager, without delay, about any work situation that might present a serious and imminent danger to themselves or others, or about any other problems in health and safety arrangements.
- Make sure they know and follow the guidance given in the use of work equipment, risk assessments, and protective measures needed when working (such as personal protective equipment or tools/ equipment).
- Maintain tools and equipment and report any problems or risk identified in the use of equipment to their manager.
- Use tools, materials and equipment properly and for the purpose intended.
- Follow all instructions (whether spoken or in writing) given to protect their safety and the safety of others.
- Be appropriately dressed for the particular working conditions and activities.
- Behave appropriately, and responsibly at all times in the workplace.
- Report all accidents, near misses, incidents of violence, diseases and dangerous events (whether or not someone is injured), as well as unsafe conditions, including methods of work, practices, tools, plant, premises or equipment, to their line manager, their safety representative or the Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager where appropriate.
- Make suggestions to improve health and safety.
- Attend suitable training courses designed to further the needs of health and safety, as necessary.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

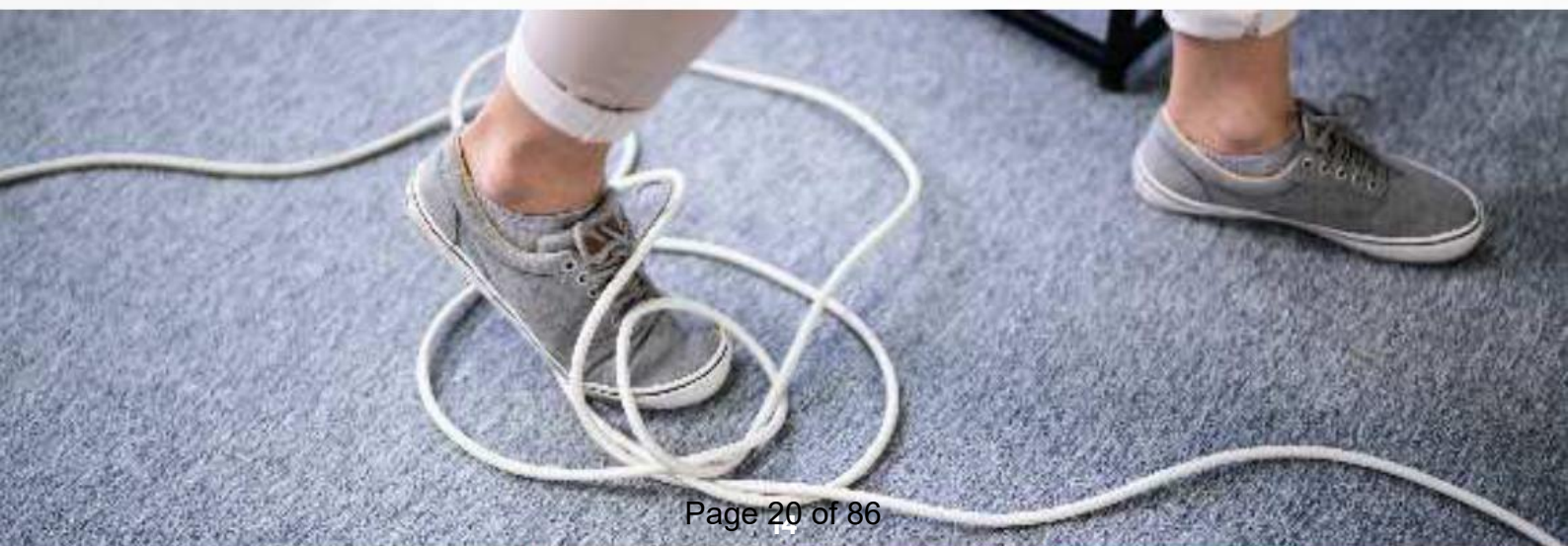
## 2.8 Health and Safety Steering Group

The key aim of the group is to facilitate the improvement of the health, safety and welfare of all employees of the Council, and any others who may be affected by the Council's activities. The group operates as an operational group made up of certain team managers and other relevant personnel (representing all directorates), and a representative of Unison (where available). The group is chaired by the Assistant Team Manager Environmental Health and Licensing. The operational group is overseen by a Strategic Group made up of elected members, relevant CLT/ELT members, and is chaired by the Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager

The Steering Group will:

- Ensure through monitoring and scrutiny processes that across the Council there is both leadership and a coordinated approach towards health and safety issues.
- Monitor progress/achievement of the improvement/action plan.
- Assist in a rolling program of activities to improve and monitor the effectiveness of health and safety within the Council by reference to accident/incident reports, compliance with legislation, audits and benchmarking.
- Develop a mechanism to monitor health and safety performance within the Council.
- Establish specific work groups (for example, fire safety, lone working etc.) as necessary to develop, monitor and review health and safety initiatives to meet legal requirements or promote continuous improvement.
- Promote a positive, proactive safety culture within the Council.
- Consider and discuss new and proposed health and safety legislation and its impact on the Council.
- Report progress to members through Cabinet and Standards and Resources Committee.

Details regarding the constitution of the steering group, and frequency of meetings can be found in the Steering Group Terms of Reference which can be found on the local intranet, the Core.



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

Set up and maintain safe, healthy, working conditions.





# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 3. ARRANGEMENTS

These arrangements describe the systems and procedures necessary to ensure that the Chief Executive, along with the Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members, fulfil their responsibilities and provide the foundation for securing the health and safety of the Council's employees and others affected by its undertakings, within a framework of good corporate governance.

Good health and safety governance is applied through robust systems and processes and effective leadership and high standards of behaviour. The Corporate Leadership Team establish a vision of successful health and safety management throughout the whole organisation from management objectives to individual roles and responsibilities that filter through the whole organisation.

### 3.1 - Health and Safety Leadership

Strong leadership on health and safety will be provided by the Chief Executive, the Corporate Leadership Team consisting of Cabinet and Councilors, and the Health and Safety Steering group to form a Strategic Management Board to establish a vision of successful health and safety management. This leadership and vision will generate clarity about health and safety strategy, management objectives, health and safety roles and responsibilities and foster a positive health and safety culture.

Arrangements for implementing the Council's health and safety policy have been developed and are available via the Core health and safety section.

These include procedures for the action to be taken in the event of fire, accident reporting, working with computers, lone working and other common health and safety topics.

Hard copies of policies/procedures are available should they be requested from Corporate Health and Safety:

**Appendix A** shows a list of current policies/procedures; however, this list is not exhaustive and will be updated as and when required. For current data, referral to the local intranet is required.

### 3.2 - Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments should reflect either occupation or task. All staff should approach health, safety and welfare in a risk based and systematic way by:

- Identifying hazards.
- Deciding who may be harmed and how.
- Evaluating in terms of risk.
- Review existing control measures and introduce additional control measures, if required.
- Monitoring and reviewing the results.

Hazards are things that have the potential for harm, risk is the chance or likelihood that the harm will be realised together with the severity of the outcome.

Formal risk assessments must be conducted by employees trained in undertaking risk assessments and approved or in conjunction with Team Managers/ Assistant Team Managers for all activities to ensure that appropriate control measures are put in place.



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

Anyone affected (directly or indirectly) by the assessment must be notified of any remaining risk. This will ensure that the assessment is suitable and sufficient, controls are reasonable and implemented, and that risk is minimised, so far as reasonably practicable.

Informal “on the job” or “dynamic” risk assessments should be carried out on an individual basis where conditions require, for example, if there are changes to site or to consider weather conditions e.g., working on site, driving in bad weather etc.

Risk assessments will be reviewed and amended, where necessary, on an annual basis or

- when significant changes in the activities occur.
- following an accident or incident arising from the related activities.
- the results of monitoring reveals problems of compliance or effectiveness.

## 3.3 Contractors

The Council employs a number of contractors engaged in a variety of tasks ranging from building maintenance to catering. All contractors shall be required to co-operate with the Council's health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that risks associated with their activities are effectively managed. Specific guidance for contractors is included in the contractor's handbook, on the Core.

Any service area engaging a contractor, must ensure that the contractor is provided with relevant information relating to the Council's health and safety procedures, particularly the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire or other emergency. Where appropriate, contractors will also be required to provide risk assessments and method statements for works they are undertaking either during the procurement process or prior to commencement of work.

## 3.4 Occupational Health

Occupational Health (OH) provision is through Staffordshire County Council Occupational Health Service. The OH facility is a service that is for employees who have been referred either by their line manager or Human Resources. Additional specific OH assistance is provided by appropriate Occupational Health practitioners/service providers in relation to relevant health surveillance for example, audiometric testing for those employees exposed to noise or noise making equipment as part of their work activities, Hand Arm Vibration monitoring for employees involved in using vibration tools/ equipment etc. Please see the Health Surveillance policy.

## 3.5 New and Expectant Mothers

Procedures are in place to protect new and expectant mothers from possible ill health effects at work. The Council is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all new and expectant mothers throughout employment and will ensure appropriate arrangements are in place regardless of the type of work carried out by members of staff.

A new and expectant mother risk assessment can be found on the Core. The Team Manager or Assistant Team Manager should complete for the employee with support from the Health and Safety team.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 3.6 Accidents, Incidents and Near Miss Reporting

The accident/incident reporting procedure, which is located on the health and safety section of the Core, details arrangements to ensure all accidents and near miss events are reported promptly – including the arrangements used for leisure centres which differs to that for other parts of the organisation.

## 3.7 First Aid Arrangements

A number of staff are trained in first aid skills in accordance with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

First aiders work on a rota basis to ensure that there is adequate first aid provision for staff during normal working hours (9am-5pm). First aid equipment is located on each floor occupied by council staff and communication of staff who are trained first aiders is available on The Core.

Refresher training is provided at appropriate intervals to maintain competence. The first aid risk assessment can be found in the health and safety section of the Core.



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 3.8 Fire

Arrangements are in place to ensure that:

- Fires are prevented.
- People are protected against fire.
- Property is protected against fire.
- Business is not interrupted by fire.
- Procedures are known and followed if fire occurs.
- All fire precautions are monitored and maintained.

The fire alarm system at the Council offices is tested weekly at approximately 9.00 am on Monday mornings when a minimum of two call points are tested each week, to cover all call points over a period of time. Testing of the fire alarm system at Leisure Centres is in accordance with local rules agreed with the adjoining school.

### Fire risk assessment

Fire risk assessments will be undertaken for the Council offices, Leisure Centres and tenanted Council commercial properties. These are carried out by a specialist fire safety consultant.

Fire Notices are displayed throughout the Council building, Leisure Centres and communal areas of the tenanted Council commercial buildings.

To comply with the law, fire risk assessments will be current and any outstanding high-risk requirements in the action plan be complied with.

## 3.9 Information, Instruction, Training and Supervision

Staff must be provided with relevant information, clear job-related instruction, and adequate levels of supervision to ensure their competence.


Team Managers must ensure that systems are in place within their areas of responsibility and particularly for new starters. The Environmental Health and Licensing Team Manager should be contacted for any specific advice or information.

Health and safety training is incorporated at induction and refreshers as necessary, including elected member induction.

Individual health and safety training needs should be identified within the My Review procedure or raised directly with line managers.



# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

A person is shown from the waist down, carrying a large, unbalanced stack of cardboard boxes. The stack is precariously balanced, with one box tilted and about to fall. The person is wearing blue jeans, a plaid shirt, and sneakers. The background is a plain, light-colored wall and floor.

Take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by what they do while at work.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## 4. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

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### 4.1 Health and safety objectives and plans

The health and safety action plan is approved by the Corporate Leadership Team. It is initiated and monitored by the Health and Safety Steering Group. The system must provide an appraisal of performance whilst maintaining and providing a process of continual improvement in health and safety management.

### 4.2 Arrangements for monitoring Health and Safety performance

Health and safety performance is monitored by providing reports to the Health and Safety Steering Group, Corporate Leadership Team, the Cabinet, and Standards and Resources Committee.

## 5. AUDITING AND REVIEW

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Health and safety systems and processes must support accountability and will include risk management and performance management information and health and safety inspections, audits and monitoring. These systems and processes must be robust, produce reliable information that is reported to the Health & Safety Steering Group and the Corporate Leadership Team and to enable informed decisions to be made and to achieve set objectives.

An independent audit by an external health and safety specialist will be carried out as deemed necessary to measure the performance of our health and safety management systems. The audit report will be presented to the Health and Safety Steering Group.

## 6. POLICY CONSULTATION

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The following groups were consulted in the development of this policy, and this final version reflects their feedback.

- Health and Safety Steering Group.
- Corporate Leadership Team.
- Unison.
- Cabinet Members.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

Employees should tell their line manager, without delay, about any work situation that might present a serious and imminent danger to themselves or others, or about any other problems in health and safety arrangements.





## APPENDIX A -

### RELATED HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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- Accident reporting.
- Alcohol and substance abuse.
- Contractor Safety.
- Consultation.
- Corporate Events.
- COSHH.
- Display screen equipment.
- **Facilities Management** (Includes - Asbestos Manage, Electrical installation Pat, Gas Safety, Legionella, Lift Maintenance, Security).
- Fire Safety and Evacuation.
- First aid.
- Health Surveillance.
- Lone workers.
- Manual Handling operations.
- Risk assessment.
- Smoking at work.
- Security.
- Stress Management.
- Agile Working Toolkit.
- Lockdown policy.

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy



**South Staffordshire Council**  
**[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)**

Council Offices  
Codsall  
South Staffordshire  
WV8 1PX  
Tel: **01902 696000**



**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL****STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2023****ELECTIONS ACT 2022 UPDATE****REPORT OF CORPORATE SUPPORT TEAM MANAGER****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

1.1 To update the Committee on the Elections Act 2022.

**2.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Having a well-managed Electoral Services Team contributes to the objectives in the Council Plan.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (Equal) been completed?	
	No	Not applicable – information report only
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	Not applicable – information report only
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No	Not applicable – report to Standards and Resources Committee.
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Not applicable.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	
LEGAL ISSUES	No	Compliance with the legislative requirements around elections is mandatory.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	Not applicable.	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Not applicable.

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3.0 INFORMATION**

3.1 The Elections Act 2022 makes a range of changes to electoral law and processes. The first tranche of those changes which included the introduction of Voter ID and new accessibility requirements were implemented for the elections in May 2023.

3.2 The second tranche of changes come into force in advance of the May 2024 polls. These provisions relate to:

- Absent Voting.
- Overseas electors.
- EU citizens' voting and candidacy rights.
- Postal vote handling and secrecy and commonly used names.

3.3 They will apply at the following types of elections:

- UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain.
- Local Elections.
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

### **4.0 Absent Voting**

#### **Postal and proxy voting identity checking requirements**

4.1 All absent vote applications (except for emergency proxy applications) made on or after 31 October 2023 must contain a **National Insurance Number (NINo)** or a reason why one cannot be provided.

4.2 The personal identifiers contained on the application (name, address, date of birth and NINo) must initially be **verified against Department of Works and Pension (DWP) data**.

4.3 Where an application fails to match with DWP data – electors will be required to provide **documentary evidence** to verify their identity. Where this is not possible, electors must submit an **attestation** to confirm their identity.

#### **Online absent vote applications**

4.4 From 31 October 2023 electors (except for anonymous electors) are now able to apply for most types of **absent vote online** via [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote).

4.5 Electors can apply for the following absent votes both online and through a paper application:

- Postal vote
- Proxy vote for a particular election or referendum
- Proxy application for definite or indefinite period for overseas and service electors

- 4.6 Electors will not be able to apply for the following absent votes online but can continue to be applied for through a paper application:
- Proxy postal application
  - Postal waiver application
  - Proxy application for definite or indefinite period due to disability
  - Proxy application for definite or indefinite period due to employment, service etc.
  - Emergency proxy application

#### **Maximum period for absent vote applications**

- 4.7 From 31 October 2023, a **postal vote** can be in place for:
- a particular poll (poll held on specific date)
  - a definite period of not more than 3 years
  - a maximum period of up to 3 years
- 4.8 Electors applying for a postal vote will now only be able to hold their postal vote until the third 31 January following the date on which their application was granted.
- 4.9 For electors with a long-term postal vote (in place before 31 October 2023) there will be transitional arrangements. Existing domestic electors will be able to vote by post for relevant polls until 31 January 2026.
- 4.10 Proxy voters can continue to put in place a proxy arrangement for an indefinite period (subject to a three yearly eligibility check and five yearly signature refresh). However, all existing proxy voters who have an arrangement in place before 31 October 2023 must reapply and make a fresh application by 31 January 2024.
- 4.11 We intend to send out a notice to existing proxy voters informing them of the need to reapply early December 2023 and a reminder sent in early January 2024.

#### **Changes to proxy voting limits**

- 4.12 The number of people a person can act as proxy for has also been restricted from 31 October 2023.
- 4.13 A person is not entitled to vote as proxy in any electoral area on behalf of more than four electors. Within the four electors, no more than two electors can be domestic electors. Domestic electors are those electors who are neither service voters nor overseas electors.

## **5.0 Overseas electors**

- 5.1 The removal of the 15-year limit on expatriates' right to vote in UK Parliamentary elections in January 2024. All British citizens overseas who were previously registered or resident in the UK will be enfranchised.
- 5.2 The registration period will be extended to a maximum of three years and renewals will be set to a fixed point of 1 November, in line with the updated absent voting provisions for overseas electors.
- 5.3 Overseas electors will have the option to re-apply for a postal or refresh their proxy vote, which will then be 'tied' to the new three-year period of registration (unless a shorter period for the absent vote is specified by the elector and it therefore expires before).

## **6.0 Next steps**

- 6.1 We will be issuing a further briefing note to the 25 January 2024 committee meeting to update on EU citizens' voting and candidacy rights and Postal Vote handling and secrecy as more details emerge.

## **7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Not applicable.

## **8.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Not applicable.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Not applicable.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To note the contents of this report.

Report prepared by:  
Rebecca Harris  
Corporate Support Team Manager

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

**REVIEW OF PARLIMENTARY POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2023/24**

**REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER INSIGHT OFFICER**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Every local authority is required to carry out a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations every five years. This is to ensure reasonable facilities are provided for voting and that polling places are accessible to all electors.
- 1.2 The last compulsory review of polling districts and polling places in the South Staffordshire Constituency commenced in October 2022 and was completed in January 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee note the current proposed changes to polling districts and places.

**3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	The delivery of the democratic process underpins the operation of local government and thus the delivery of the Council Plan objectives.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	N/A	The purpose of the review is to ensure that all voters have reasonable facilities for voting. Assessments for each polling station will be undertaken in accordance with requirements.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	N/A – report to Standards and Resources Committee	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	January 2024	

FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	All Polling Stations have a booking fee; there is an establishment budget for the paying of these fees.
LEGAL ISSUES	None	The Council has undertaken the review in accordance with the principles in the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	All	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be. The Boundary Commission for England has completed a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries and published its final recommendations.
- 4.2 As a result of this, it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible so that the Council has agreed polling districts and polling places to be used for the next parliamentary election, which must take place before 28 January 2025, as well as the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections which will be held in May 2024.
- 4.3 There is no change to the boundaries only the names of the Constituency have been changed (Kingswinford and South Staffordshire Constituency and Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge Constituency).
- 4.4 A notice to launch the review was published on the 13 November 2023 and full details of the review are available on the Council's website and notice boards. The review is also being promoted on social media and through news round-ups. Information on the proposed scheme by the (Acting) Returning Officer Dave Heywood is also available on the website during the review.

### **Consultation and engagement**

- 4.5 We will undertake a proportionate consultation with stakeholders and those with an interest in the review, including but not limited to:
- Local government electors/residents of the district
  - Parish and town councils

- Parish meetings
- District councillors
- County councillors
- Members of Parliament
- Residents Associations
- Local public and voluntary organisations
- Local disability groups
- Polling place venues
- Political parties

4.6 Following the combined local elections in May 2023, we reviewed the feedback provided to us from our Polling Station Inspectors, Presiding Officers, Candidates and agents and electors to ensure that the Polling Stations remain suitable for electors.

4.7 There is only one proposed change following local elections and feedback provided. Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency, Polling District RAA, Perton East, move from Perton Pavillion and Scout Club, Gainsborough Drive, Perton to 'The Lakeside Hall' - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road. This change is recommended due to feedback of poor accessibility at night and in wet weather. Furthermore, due to the building being unusable at the local election in May the Lakeside Hall was used, and no complaints were received in the change of venue. The Lakeside Hall is easier and safer to access and a more suitable venue for a polling station.

#### **Publishing the conclusions of the review**

4.8 Following approval from the Standards and Resources Committee on January 26th, we will publish a notice of conclusion of the review on the Council's website, take any associated actions and provide a link to this report which shows all the correspondence we received as part of the review.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Notice of the review

Appendix B – Acting Returning Officer comments on proposed polling stations

Report prepared by: Thomas Reynolds, Performance and Customer Insight Officer



**South Staffordshire Council**  
**Notice of Polling Districts and Polling Places Review**

Notice is hereby given that South Staffordshire Council is conducting a review of polling districts and polling places within South Staffordshire in accordance with Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Relevant information and mapping regarding the current arrangements and proposals for changes can be found on the [Council's website](#) or can be inspected at South Staffordshire Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX.

Electors within the Council area or within a UK Parliamentary constituency which has any part in the authority may make a representation. We invite comments from all electors regarding the convenience of voting at polling stations currently used for elections and would welcome suggestions for alternative sites.

We welcome and encourage the views of all residents, particularly disabled residents and comments from any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability. Any person or body making a representation should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places.

Any proposals for changes or suggestions can be made on a submission form from the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Please [click here](#) to view the submission form. The deadline for submission is 5pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

The (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) will publish a report outlining the proposed and existing polling stations on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on the Council's website and a copy will be available at the Council Offices. To access that report [click here](#).

Comments and representations may be submitted as follows:

<b>By post</b>	South Staffordshire Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX.
<b>By email</b>	<a href="mailto:elections@sstaffs.gov.uk">elections@sstaffs.gov.uk</a>
<b>By completing</b>	The submission online

**Timetable**

Date	Action
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Publication of the notice of review on the website and at South Staffordshire Community Hub.
13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Consultation period.

13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	The (Acting) Returning Officer will also be commenting on proposed polling stations.
25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Provisional decisions presented to the Standards and Resources Committee.
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Publishing final conclusions of the Review and republish revised register if required

The outcome of the review will be published by the Council in February 2024 and will be available for inspection on the Council's website and at the South Staffordshire Community Hub.

Anybody making representations should be aware that, upon completion of the review, all correspondence and representations received must, by law, also be published.

For more information  
South Staffordshire Community Hub  
Wolverhampton Road  
South Staffordshire  
WV8 1PX  
E-mail: [elections@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@sstaffs.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01902 696242

Poll Dist	District Ward	Current Parliamentary Constituency	Proposed Parliamentary Constituency	Existing Polling Place	Polling Station Changes & Comments	Elector Count	Elector Postal
AAB	Bilbrook	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Bilbrook Village Hall, Joeys Lane, Bilbrook	No Change	2030	390
ABB	Bilbrook	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Holy Cross Church Hall, Bilbrook Road, Bilbrook	No Change	1423	163
ACB	Bilbrook	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Holy Cross Church Hall, Bilbrook Road, Bilbrook	No Change	428	36
DAA	Codsall North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Codsall Village Hall (Main Hall), Wolverhampton Road, Codsall	No Change	3529	557
DBA	Codsall North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Holy Cross Church Hall, Bilbrook Road, Bilbrook	No Change	896	152
DCA	Codsall North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Trinity Methodist Church Hall (Church Lounge), Histons Hill	No Change	1931	301
JAA	Himley & Swindon	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Himley Cricket Club, Stourbridge Road, Himley	No Change	356	65
JBA	Himley & Swindon	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Adventure Street, Baggeridge Craft Village, Brick Kiln Way	No Change	654	117
JCA	Himley & Swindon	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Swindon Community Centre, High Street, Swindon	No Change	837	105
JDA	Himley & Swindon	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Wardens Office, Hinksford Mobile Home Park, Hinksford Lane, Hinksford Park	No Change	247	39
LAA	Kinver & Enville	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Athletic Club, Hall Drive, Enville	No Change	421	55
LBA	Kinver & Enville	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Edward Marsh Centre, Legion Drive, Off High Street	No Change	1352	268
LCA	Kinver & Enville	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Stourbridge Lawn Tennis And Squash Club, Sugar Loaf Lane, Stourbridge	No Change	147	14
LDA	Kinver & Enville	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Edward Marsh Centre, Legion Drive, Off High Street	No Change	2860	461
LEA	Kinver & Enville	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Stourton Village Hall, Bridgnorth Road, Stourton	No Change	1606	307

NAA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Bobbington Village Hall, Six Ashes Road, Bobbington	No Change	417	51
NBA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Victory Hall, Lower Penn, Greyhound Lane, Lower Penn	No Change	820	170
NCA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Crown Room At Dartmouth Arms, Snowdon Road, Burnhill Green	No Change	140	31
NDA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Pattingham Village Hall, Wolverhampton Road, Pattingham	No Change	1649	235
NEA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Trysull Village Hall, The Green, Trysull	No Change	545	86
NFA	Pattingham, Trysull, Bobbington & Lower Penn	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Trysull Village Hall, The Green, Trysull	No Change	421	41
RAA	Perton East	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Perton pavillion and Scout Club, Gainsborough Drive, Perton	Move to 'The Lakeside Hall - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road	2029	351
SAA	Perton Lakeside	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Lakeside Hall - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road, Perton	No Change	2690	355
SBA	Perton Lakeside	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Perton Library, Severn Drive	No Change	882	145
TAA	Perton Wrottesley	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Airman`s Lounge - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road, Perton	No Change	1761	258
TBA	Perton Wrottesley	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Kingswood Trust, Holyhead Road, Kingswood	No Change	316	63
TCA	Perton Wrottesley	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	The Airman`s Lounge - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road, Perton	No Change	209	49

WAA	Wombourne North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Wombourne Community Centre, Church Road, Wombourne	No Change	4203	658
WBA	Wombourne North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	St Bartholomew's Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Penn	No Change	228	17
WCA	Wombourne North	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Brook Room, Wombourne Civic Centre, Wombourne Civic Centre, Gravel Hill	No Change	1137	197
XAA	Wombourne South	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Wodehouse Suite, Wombourne Civic Centre, Gravel Hill	No Change	2275	300
XBA	Wombourne South	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Wodehouse Suite, Wombourne Civic Centre, Gravel Hill	No Change	2338	280
XCA	Wombourne South	South Staffordshire	Kingswinford & South Staffordshire	Bede Hall, Wombourne Parish Offices, Giggetty Lane	No Change	1134	118
BAB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Blymhill Village Hall, School Lane, Blymhill	No Change	377	66
BBB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	The Institute Rooms, Watling Street, Weston-Under-Lizard	No Change	229	49
BCB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Bishopswood Village Hall, Boscobel lane, Bishopswood	No Change	605	76
BDB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Jubilee Hall, Brewood, Bargate Street, Brewood	No Change	2527	409
BEB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Coven Memorial Hall, Brewood Road, Coven	No Change	2635	362
BFB	Brewood, Coven & Blymhill	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Mobile at Allotments Car Park, Ball Lane, Coven	No Change	305	37
CAB	Cheslyn Hay Village	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Hawkins Sports and Social Club, Coppice Lane, Cheslyn Hay	No Change	1157	117
CBB	Cheslyn Hay Village	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Cheslyn Hay Village Hall, Pinfold Lane, Cheslyn Hay	No Change	1595	199
CCB	Cheslyn Hay Village	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Salem Sunday School, High Street, Cheslyn Hay	No Change	1171	182
CDB	Cheslyn Hay Village	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Salem Sunday School, High Street, Cheslyn Hay	No Change	1662	200

CEB	Cheslyn Hay Village	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Salem Sunday School, High Street, Cheslyn Hay	No Change	478	68
EAA	Essington	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	The Pavilion, Essington, Broad Lane, Essington	No Change	484	57
EBA	Essington	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Essington Community Centre, Hobnock Road, Essington	No Change	2475	303
ECA	Essington	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Wyrley Juniors FC Club House, Long Lane	No Change	372	43
EDA	Essington	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Essington Rugby Club, High Hill, Essington	No Change	337	39
EEA	Essington	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Westcroft Nursery, Adjacent To 240 Cannock Road, Westcroft	No Change	395	44
FAA	Featherstone, Shareshill & Saredon	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Featherstone Community Centre (Main Hall), Baneberry Drive, Featherstone	No Change	352	42
FBA	Featherstone, Shareshill & Saredon	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Featherstone Community Centre (Main Hall), Baneberry Drive, Featherstone	No Change	2616	273
FCA	Featherstone, Shareshill & Saredon	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Featherstone Community Centre (Main Hall), Baneberry Drive, Featherstone	No Change	179	32
FDA	Featherstone, Shareshill & Saredon	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Wedges Mills Village Hall, Wolverhampton Road	No Change	650	77
FEA	Featherstone, Shareshill & Saredon	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Shareshill Village Hall, Elms Lane, Shareshill	No Change	605	84
GAA	Great Wyrley Landywood	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Harrisons Sports and Social Club, Wharwell Lane, Great Wyrley	No Change	1912	217
GBA	Great Wyrley Landywood	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Great Wyrley Community Centre, Landywood Lane	No Change	1242	104
GCA	Great Wyrley Landywood	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Senior Citizens Centre, Broadmeadow Lane, Great Wyrley	No Change	766	93

HAA	Great Wyrley Town	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Church Hall At St Thomas More Primary School, Huthill Lane, Great Wyrley	No Change	1366	219
HBA	Great Wyrley Town	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Scout & Guide Centre, Walsall Road, Great Wyrley	No Change	1141	178
HCA	Great Wyrley Town	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Great Wyrley Community Centre, Landywood Lane	No Change	1670	214
KAA	Huntington & Hatherton	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Hatherton Parish Rooms, Four Crosses Lane, Four Crosses	No Change	506	72
KBA	Huntington & Hatherton	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Huntington Community Centre, Stafford Road, Huntington	No Change	1225	131
KCA	Huntington & Hatherton	South Staffordshire	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Naden House-Communal Lounge, Stafford Road, Huntington	No Change	2238	257
MAA	Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Stretton Lodge Day Nursery & Pre School, School Lane, Stretton	No Change	277	54
MBA	Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Stretton Lodge Day Nursery & Pre School, School Lane, Stretton	No Change	113	6
MCA	Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Wheaton Aston Village Hall, High Street, Wheaton Aston	No Change	1776	192
OAA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Acton Trussell Community Centre, Acton Hill Road, Acton Trussell	No Change	665	88
OBA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	All Saints School, School Lane, Bednall	No Change	358	60
OCA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Hyde Lea Village Hall, Hyde Lea	No Change	254	42
ODA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Dunston Village Hall, School Lane, Dunston	No Change	215	25
OEA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Haling Dene Centre, Cannock Road, Penkridge	No Change	1516	213
OFA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Peace Memorial Hall, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge	No Change	1086	181
OGA	Penkridge North & Acton Trussell	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Peace Memorial Hall, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge	No Change	343	60

PAA	Penkridge South & Gailey	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	The Reading Room, Market Street, Penkridge	No Change	1326	196
PBA	Penkridge South & Gailey	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Spread Eagle Hotel, Watling Street, Gailey	No Change	159	14
PCA	Penkridge South & Gailey	Stafford	Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge	Princefield First School, Saxon Road, Penkridge	No Change	2981	383



**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL****STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2023****CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND  
CORPORATE POLICY MANAGER****LEAD CABINET MEMBER – DAVID WILLIAMS, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report presents an updated Customer Feedback Policy (appendix 1) to Standards and Resources Committee for information. Alongside this policy, a new procedure is being introduced for the management of customer complaints, comments and compliments, underpinned by a new on-line system which will improve the management of these processes. The management of these processes through the online system will also enable regular reporting and data analysis to inform service changes.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Customer feedback relates to all of the Council Plan priorities and the proposed changes are facilitated by making better use of the technology now available to us through recent investments.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	Yes	Yes – appendix 2
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	Yes	Yes – appendix 3
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No	This policy is being presented to Standards and Resources Committee for their information
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE		
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	Costs are within the broader programme of system improvements.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	The Policy incorporates provisions for complaint investigations which can potentially be escalated by customers to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

		Equality data collection is being introduced in line with our Public Sector Equality Duty.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	None	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	None

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

3.1 The current Customer Feedback Policy was introduced in April 2014. While most of the policy remains unchanged, the significant proposed updates include:

- A new online dedicated form being made available on the Council website for people to make complaints and submit comments and compliments. This form is linked to a Verint based system to manage these interactions.
- People choosing to use this method to provide feedback will be asked to voluntarily complete equality profile questions to improve insight into this important aspect of customer interaction. Previously, equality data was collected in the occasional surveys of people who had made complaints. Collecting this information at the start of interactions is recommended as a key improvement.
- All other channels – including telephone, in-person and written interactions (email, social media direct messaging and letters) are still available to customers but will all be inputted to the new system for recording interactions, sharing comments and compliments and investigating and responding to complaints.
- It is recommended that complaints must normally be submitted within three months of the matter or incident being complained about. This had previously been 12 months. Often, data retention requirements can result in data on interactions being deleted well before the current 12 month limit and no longer available for some investigations. As shorter time limit is consistent with practice elsewhere.

3.2 The review has been undertaken alongside the development of a new procedure for managing complaints, comments and compliments which is supported by a new system based on the Verint Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is being rolled out across many service areas in the Council.

- 3.3 The Verint CRM will enable improvements to the management and recording of customer interactions. In particular, it will improve the administration of complaints handling and other feedback. The management of these processes through the online system will also enable regular reporting and data analysis to inform service changes. The Verint CRM platform is also being used in the management of other services, such as garden waste accounts and Freedom of Information requests and will be rolled out in many other service areas.

#### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 Equality Impact (appendix 2) and Data Protection (appendix 3) Assessments are attached.

#### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 5.1 The current Policy was adopted by Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 The proposed Customer Feedback Policy is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Standards and Resources Committee is asked to note the Customer Feedback Policy.

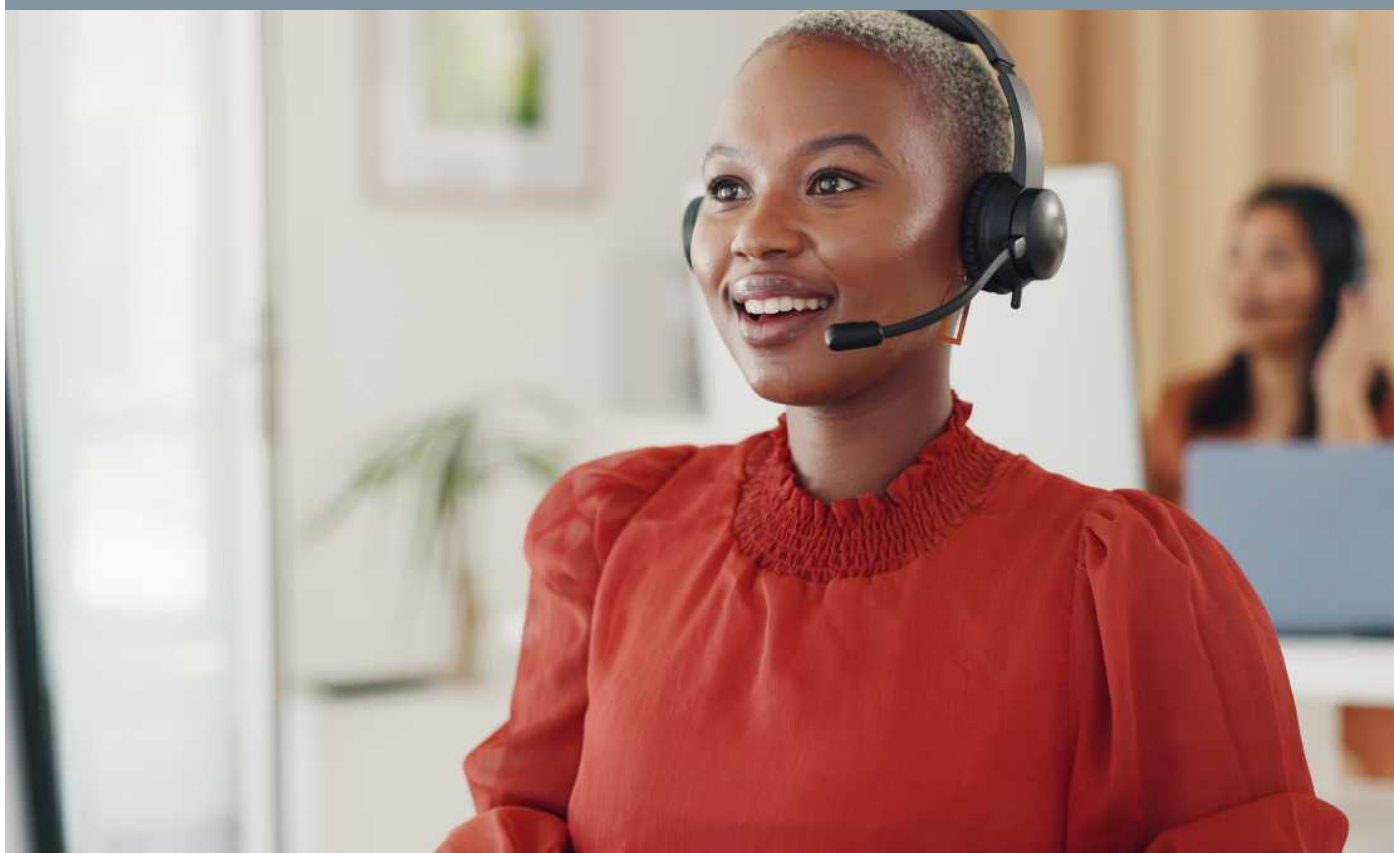
Report prepared by: Kevin Hubery – Corporate Policy Manager





# **Customer Feedback Policy**

**Comments, Compliments and Complaints**



# Customer Feedback Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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South Staffordshire Council continues to being a committed customer focused organisation and wants to work with customers to develop and improve services. The way we handle customer feedback is a key component in this process and the council welcomes comments, compliments, and complaints.

### Comments

South Staffordshire Council welcomes all feedback and recognises that customers may wish to comment on services or decisions. These comments can play an important part in improving service delivery and will be recorded and forwarded to the relevant service area for consideration and action.

### Compliments

Customers may also provide compliments or expressions of gratitude to particular employees or council teams. These are equally useful and very much welcomed as they tell us that we are doing things right. These will also be recorded and forwarded on to the relevant service area for feedback to their teams.

Customer feedback can be made by email, social media, telephone, in writing or by completing the council's feedback form.

We will also ensure we deliver better services by continuously monitoring our performance when dealing with comments, compliments and complaints, by following a standard procedure to achieve consistency and will ensure that we use the feedback to improve council services.

### Complaints

It is important to remember that reporting a fault or a problem is not necessarily a complaint, but may simply be a request for service, such as reporting a missed bin collection which can be resolved quickly. It might also relate to a minor fault, such as a broken locker at a leisure centre, which will usually be dealt with immediately. It is only if the customer remains dissatisfied with our response or there is evidence of multiple service failures for the same request that the complaints procedure (outlined below) will apply.

#### Feedback, including complaints, can be made by:

- Email: **customerfeedback@sstaffs.gov.uk**
- Website: **Comments, compliments and complaints**
- X: **@south\_staffs**
- Facebook: **facebook.com/southstaffs**
- Post: **South Staffordshire Council, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PX**
- Telephone: **01902 696000**
- In person by visiting the council premises



# Customer Feedback Policy

## 2. TIMESCALES FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

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Complaints must be made no later than three months after the date on which the matter occurred. If there are good reasons for not having made the complaint within the above time frame and, if it is still possible for the council to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly, we may decide to still consider the complaint.

## 3. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

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**The council, takes complaints seriously and has adopted the following definition from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.**

*“A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission or decision of the council (whether that is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner on our behalf) either verbally or in writing, and whether justified or not, which requires a response”*

Any person receiving a service from the council can make a complaint if they feel that there has been a failure in the service, they have received which includes the following:

- Delay in providing a service requested.
- A failure to provide a service as detailed in the council's published standards.
- The unhelpful attitude or conduct of a council employee or contractor.
- Neglect or unreasonable delay in responding to a request for service.
- A failure to follow the council's agreed policies, rules or procedures.
- Malice, bias or discrimination.

**Note - there is currently a consultation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to introduce a new complaint handling code which will become the single gold standard for the local government sector – we will update this policy when the code is finalised.**

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 4. COMPLAINTS THAT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED UNDER THIS POLICY

Certain types of complaints are not intended to be dealt with by this policy and will be dealt with through other channels by a more appropriately placed member of staff in the organisation, including our customer advisors. We will aim to deal with these in line with our commitment to providing good customer service and we will always explain why a complaint cannot be dealt with and of any alternative rights of appeal or review where appropriate. These include:

- Some matters raised with us are requests for service and will be responded to without being treated as complaint.
- Complaints relating to established council policy or the council's implementation of government policy.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal (either within the council or via an employment tribunal), or a legal remedy (e.g., a penalty charge notice, parking ticket, housing benefits, and planning applications); although a complaint regarding how the process was carried out will be considered.
- Insurance claims.
- Requests for the council to engage with a third party over a problem which the council may have some control/regulating function.
- Ombudsman complaints (except for those which the ombudsman asks the council to deal with through its complaints procedure).
- Complaints from former and existing staff about human resources issues, including appointments, dismissals, pay, pensions and discipline.
- Commercial or contractual matters, for example contracts for the supply of goods and services to the council.
- Freedom of information, and data protection subject access requests, or complaints about the decision, the information provided or how a request was handled.
- A complaint that is to be dealt with or has already been dealt with by a court or other statutory body.
- Complaints about restrictive contact arrangements, such as but not limited to, single point of contact arrangements and bans.
- Complaints that are the subject of on-going legal action, which also includes complainants who themselves are subject to an investigation for any breaches of legislation enforced by the council.
- A complaint or an allegation of criminal or unlawful conduct should be made to the councils monitoring officer by emailing **monitoring\_officer@sstaffs.gov.uk**
- Allegations of fraud or corruption by council staff should be made to the Counter Fraud Manager either by emailing **fraud@staffordshire.gov.uk** or by ringing the fraud telephone line on **0800 7311 890**
- Complaints that are unreasonably persistent or vexatious.

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 5. COMPLAINT STAGES

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### Stage 1 - Complaint

You will receive immediate confirmation that we have received the complaint and we will investigate and aim to provide a full response to your complaint within 10 working days.

If we need more time, we will let you know and when you can expect a response.

In a response to your complaint, we will explain whether the complaint has been upheld or not, the reason for the decision and let you know the grounds on which you are able to appeal should you disagree with the outcome.

If you are unable to make the complaint yourself you may ask someone else to do this.

### Stage 2 - Review

Once you have received your stage 1 response, if you are still not satisfied, you may ask for a review.

Examples when an outcome may be reviewed:

- **Not all aspects of the complaint were addressed at Stage 1 (in these circumstances the original investigating officer may be asked to look at the complaint again).**
- **If the complainant feels the response to their original complaint was not fully addressed and any wrong has not been adequately addressed or rectified.**

The complainant will be expected to explain, the grounds for seeking a review and give clear reasons why.

You must ask for a review no later than 20 working days from our initial stage 1 reply.

We will immediately acknowledge receipt of your request for a review. A detailed response will be made within 20 working days. If we cannot meet this target, you will be sent a progress report.

There are some circumstances in which the council will decide it not appropriate to review the complaint further and, in these circumstances, you will receive a response providing you reasons as to why this is the case.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way the complaint was managed, you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Details are on page 9 (section 10).

You may ask someone else to do this on your behalf.

# Customer Feedback Policy

## **What will happen when you send us a comment?**

You will receive an acknowledgment of your comment and it will be sent to the service.

## **What will happen when you send us a compliment?**

You will receive an acknowledgment of your compliment and it will be sent to the service.

## **What will happen when you complain to us?**

You should complain to us within three months of the matter occurring.

We will try to resolve the matter for you.

If you are not satisfied we investigate the matter and respond to you within 10 days.

If we feel that the matter does not need to be investigated we will inform you of this and our reasons for the decision.



## **If you disagree with our response to your complaint**

You should get back to us within 20 working days explaining why you think the matter hasn't been resolved.

We will consider your request and if we agree with you then we will investigate further and get back to you within 20 working days.

If we feel that the matter has been fully investigated we will inform you of this and our reasons for this decision.



If you still disagree with our response you may wish to raise the matter with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

# Customer Feedback Policy

## 6. COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRES FROM AN MP OR COUNCILLOR

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The complaints policy is intended for individual residents to seek resolution to an issue.

The council has a separate process for residents who decide to escalate their issues via a Member of Parliament or councillor.

## 7. PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

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The objective of redress is to rectify any mistakes or problems at the earliest opportunity. The council will acknowledge faults when they occur and take responsibility for putting things right and avoiding a reoccurrence.

Following an investigation into a complaint, if it is recognised that the service did not meet the required standards, the council will:

- Apologise.
- Rectify the mistake or problem within an agreed time frame and provide you with the service you should have received.
- Review practice, policy or procedure as appropriate.

## 8. DATA RIGHTS

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In the process of handling a comment, compliment or complaint the council will be required to collect personal data and, in some circumstances, this would fall under the category of sensitive personal data. It is necessary to collect, store and use this data to administer the process and to investigate all complaints made.

Confidentiality of this information is maintained by storing on a system which is purpose built for recording feedback with limited users being allowed access. This system also maintains the function to fully audit any access to the system.

The council will keep information relating to complaints for a period in line with the latest data retention policies. After this the information will be securely destroyed.

## 9. EQUALITY MONITORING

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Anyone completing the online feedback form will be requested to voluntarily provide equality monitoring information to help the council assess whether those who access and use the feedback system are treated fairly.



# Customer Feedback Policy

## 10. ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

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If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or the way the complaint was handled, they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, who is completely independent and can investigate complaints about most council matters. The Ombudsman will normally expect complaints to go through all stages of the council's Complaints Procedure before they will consider it.

Full details of how the Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints can be found on the ombudsman website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk). Contact details as follows:

**The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

**PO Box 4771,**

**Coventry,**

**CV4 0EH.**

**Tel: 0300 061 0614**

## 11. EVALUATING OUR RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

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It is important that feedback monitoring is effective, and that information is recorded consistently across different council services. A comprehensive monitoring system has been established to allow this to happen. Feedback monitoring will be incorporated into the performance management framework so that managers and councillors can learn from feedback and services can be improved.

Key information relating to feedback including the numbers received, numbers acknowledge and responded to, and service improvements made as a result of feedback will be reported regularly at senior management.

An annual publicly available report will also be produced and will be posted on the council's website.



# Customer Feedback Policy





## APPENDIX 2: Customer Feedback (EqIA)

EqIA guidance can be found at [https://sstaffsgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/TheCore/SitePages/Equality-%26-Diversity\(1\).aspx](https://sstaffsgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/TheCore/SitePages/Equality-%26-Diversity(1).aspx)

Service:	Person responsible for the assessment:	Date EqIA completed:
Policy	Kevin Hubery	October 2023

### PART A - Identification

1	Title or name of proposal	Customer Feedback Policy
2	The commencement date of the proposal and approval e.g., CLT, Cabinet, Committee, Council	tbc
3	What are the aims, objectives, and purpose of the proposal?	<p><b>Aims:</b> An updated Customer Feedback Policy and procedure is being introduced to improve the management of these important customer interactions.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> The new on-line system which will improve the management of these processes and the provision analysis</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> the new procedure is being introduced for the management of customer complaints, comments and compliments.</p>
4	Status of the proposal	<p><b>New proposal/</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Existing proposal</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Date Last Reviewed:</b> April 2014</p>
5	Are there any other functions, policies or services which might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise?	All Council services may be subject of customer feedback – complaints, comments and compliments.
6	Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population):	Predominantly all residents of South Staffordshire and other organisations that we interact with, which may include individuals and organisation outside the area

### PART B - Evidence, Research and Stakeholder Engagement

7	List relevant examples of data (qualitative and quantitative) or any consultation information available that will enable the impact assessment to be undertaken	<p>The updated Customer Feedback Policy will include provision to encourage customers to provide equality data about themselves – although completing these questions will not be mandatory.</p> <p>Previously this information was collected during occasional surveys of customers who had made complaints to the Council.</p>
8	Evidence from the data from Question 7 of any feedback or complaints against the	The data to be collected when the new policy and procedure is implemented has the potential to provide data to inform impact in service areas.

	<b>service/policy/procedure on grounds of potential or perceived discrimination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who was consulted on this proposal?</li> <li>How has the proposal been explained to those who would be directly or indirectly affected by it?</li> <li>What outcome(s) are meant to be achieved from this proposal?</li> <li>What factor(s) could contribute to the outcome(s)?</li> <li>What factor(s) could detract from the outcome(s)?</li> </ul>		
9	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative negative affect on particular equality groups?	Yes/ No	If yes, give details
		No	

## PART C – Assessment and Differential Impacts

Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the protected characteristics and provide any comments, reason, and evidence to support this.

What is the effect of the change on each characteristic – tick one				Reason		Action* Required
	Positive impact	Negative impact*	Neutral	Explanation of impact analysis	Is this likely to be unlawful?	Yes / No
<b>Age</b> Young People (up to 18) 18-50, 50 – 65, 65+				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on any age groups in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		No
<b>Disability</b> Visual impairment Hearing impairment				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on		

Physical impairment Learning impairment Mental Health Other impairments				people with disabilities in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
Gender reassignment Transitioned Transitioning Non-Binary				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on any gender groups in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
Marriage & Civil Partnership Marriage Civil Partnership				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy,		

				the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> Pregnancy Maternity (Period after birth) Adoption				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on women who are pregnant, on maternity leave or adopting in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise.		
<b>Race</b> Ethnicity, National Origin Asylum Seeker/Refugees Gypsies & Travellers Migrants, Other				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on people from minority ethnic or national origins nor refugees, Gypsies and Traveller and migrants, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring		



				information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
<b>Religion or Belief</b> Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Others Belief e.g., Humanists Non-Belief				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on people of faith and no faith in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
<b>Sex</b> Female, Male, Non-Binary				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on people of different sexes in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to		

				be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on people of different sexual orientations in the adoption of the new Customer Feedback policy, the implementation of the new procedure to capture equality profile information when people submit feedback will provide useful monitoring information on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise. It will allow the profile of those interacting with the Council to be compared to the known demographic of the area.		
<b>Other</b> lone parents, carers, unemployed				While there is not expected to be a differential impact on lone parent families, carers or unemployed people, survey work, consultation and on-going monitoring may identify issues which will need to be considered as they arise.		

## PART D – Outcomes, Action, and Public Reporting

*What Justifiable Action Does the Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Suggest You Take?*

	Description	Yes / No
<b>A</b>	<b>No Major Change Required</b> When no potential for discrimination or adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	No
<b>B</b>	<b>Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality</b> Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments would remove the barriers identified?	No
<b>C</b>	<b>Continue despite possible adverse impact</b> For important relevant proposals, compelling reasons will be needed. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.	n/a
<b>D</b>	<b>Stop and rethink your proposal</b> Actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified; the proposal will need reviewing immediately.	No

## PART E – Monitor Evaluate and Review

Action and Monitoring Plan - where the assessment in Part C & D indicates a potential negative impact, how will this be reduced or mitigated to reduce impact moving forwards?

Conclusions Reached About Potential Impact		
Possible Impact	Group(s) Affected	Evidence
Impact Identified	Action	Responsibility
Timescale	Expected Outcomes	Review Date

## PART F – To be completed by Equality Service Group

Date Reviewed	Name of Representatives involved in Review (min of 3). If less than 3 please explain what exceptional circumstances apply
General Comments	
Recommendations	
Publish Results <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out further impact assessment, if yes state the review date and ensure this is diarised for action <input type="checkbox"/>	Specific Recommendations to Consider:
Confirm that the recommendations have been actioned or explain why if any cannot be actioned.	

**Remove the red prompt questions and this text and then send the form to your Corporate Director/Assistant Director to review and sign,**

## **Part G – Corporate Director/Assistant Director Approval**

- I am satisfied with the results of this EqIA.
- I have seen the Council's Equality Schemes or Equality Action Plan and am satisfied with the contribution it can make.

### **Approved**

**Corporate Director/Assistant Director Signature:**

**Date:**

Once signed the author of the EqIA should attach it to the report.

Please send a copy to Thomas Reynolds, Performance & Customer Insight Manager requesting that the EqIA is published on our internal equality site.

Where the EqIA relates to a member report the EqIA should be sent to Member Support at the same time as issuing your report to ensure it is on the CMIS system prior to the Cabinet/Committee/Council meeting.

If the EqIA relates to an Individual Decision, please ensure that the EqIA is attached to the report.





# Customer Feedback Policy DPIA

This follows the process set out in the ICO DPIA guidance, and should be read alongside that guidance and the [Criteria for an acceptable DPIA](#) set out in European guidelines on DPIAs.

## Submitting controller details

Name of controller	Tbc (Customer Services?)
Subject/title of DPO	Corporate Director of Governance
Name of /DPO	Lorraine Fowkes

## Step 1: Identify the need for a DPIA

Explain broadly what project aims to achieve and what type of processing it involves. You may find it helpful to refer or link to other documents, such as a project proposal. Summarise why you identified the need for a DPIA.

In the process of handling a complaint, compliment or comment, the council will be required to collect personal data and, in some circumstances, this would fall under the category of sensitive personal data.

The revised policy is proposing the collection of equality profile information to monitor equality impact in line with our Public Service Equality Duty.

It is necessary to collect, store and use this data to administer the process and to investigate all complaints made.

Confidentiality of this information is maintained by storing on a system which is purpose built for complaints with limited users being allowed access. This system also maintains the function to fully audit any access to the system.

The council will keep information relating to complaints for a period of six years following the complaint being finalised. All information which is passed the retention period is securely destroyed.

## Step 2: Describe the processing

**Describe the nature of the processing:** how will you collect, use, store and delete data? What is the source of the data? Will you be sharing data with anyone? You might find it useful to refer to a flow diagram or other way of describing data flows. What types of processing identified as likely high risk are involved?

Data will be collected when customers complete an online Customer Feedback Form – and this will include equality profile monitoring. The completion of this data is voluntary. Collated, not individual data, will be analysed for the purpose of monitoring the overall profile of customers to compare with the known demographics of the area.

Complaints investigations information is retained for six years before being deleted securely.

**Describe the scope of the processing:** what is the nature of the data, and does it include special category or criminal offence data? How much data will you be collecting and using? How often? How long will you keep it? How many individuals are affected? What geographical area does it cover?

The voluntarily completed equality monitoring data will be collected as part of the process of submitting feedback. This will only be used at aggregate level for the purposes of comparing the profile of those providing feedback to the known demographic.

**Describe the context of the processing:** what is the nature of your relationship with the individuals? How much control will they have? Would they expect you to use their data in this way? Do they include children or other vulnerable groups? Are there prior concerns over this type of processing or security flaws? Is it novel in any way? What is the current state of technology in this area? Are there any current issues of public concern that you should factor in? Are you signed up to any approved code of conduct or certification scheme (once any have been approved)?

Those providing feedback will do so on a voluntary basis. It will only be analysed at aggregate level.

**Describe the purposes of the processing:** what do you want to achieve? What is the intended effect on individuals? What are the benefits of the processing – for you, and more broadly?

Collecting equality profile information will allow the profile of those submitting feedback to be compared to the known demographic of the area.

## Step 3: Consultation process

**Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders:** describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it's not appropriate to do so. Who else do you need to involve within your organisation? Do you need to ask your processors to assist? Do you plan to consult information security experts, or any other experts?

Customer Feedback reporting will include aggregate data on the equality profile information provided.

## Step 4: Assess necessity and proportionality

**Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:** what is your lawful basis for processing? Does the processing actually achieve your purpose? Is there another way to achieve the same outcome? How will you prevent function creep? How will you ensure data quality and data minimisation? What information will you give individuals? How will you help to support their rights? What measures do you take to ensure processors comply? How do you safeguard any international transfers?

We will only analyse the data at aggregate level to understand the profile of those providing feedback.



## Step 5: Identify and assess risks

<b>Describe source of risk and nature of potential impact on individuals.</b> Include associated compliance and corporate risks as necessary.	<b>Likelihood of harm</b>	<b>Severity of harm</b>	<b>Overall risk</b>
	Remote, possible or probable	Minimal, significant or severe	Low, medium or high

## Step 6: Identify measures to reduce risk

**Identify additional measures you could take to reduce or eliminate risks identified as medium or high risk in step 5**

Risk	Options to reduce or eliminate risk	Effect on risk	Residual risk	Measure approved
None	N/A	Eliminated reduced accepted	Low medium high	Yes/no



## Step 7: Sign off and record outcomes

Item	Name/position/date	Notes
Measures approved by:		Integrate actions back into project plan, with date and responsibility for completion
Residual risks approved by:		If accepting any residual high risk, consult the ICO before going ahead
DPO advice provided:		DPO should advise on compliance, step 6 measures and whether processing can proceed
Summary of DPO advice:		
DPO advice accepted or overruled by:		If overruled, you must explain your reasons
Comments:		
Consultation responses reviewed by:		If your decision departs from individuals' views, you must explain your reasons
Comments:		
This DPIA will kept under review by:	Grant Mitchell	The DPO should also review ongoing compliance with DPIA

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL****STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2023****REPORT ON WORK PROGRAMME/COMPLAINTS****REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER (CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE)****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To inform and update Members in respect of Code of Conduct and Complaint matters.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	The work of the Committee underpins the work of the Council and delivery of the Council Plan objectives
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	Not required.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Standards and Resources Committee 23 November 2023	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	None
LEGAL ISSUES	No	None
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	None	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

**PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION****3.1 *Code of Conduct/Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Forms***

- 3.2 There are currently two active Code of Conduct complaints. Both of these relate to Parish Council members. The complaints are at the time of writing, undergoing initial assessment.

### ***Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)***

- 3.5 There has been one new decision from the Local Government Ombudsman since the last meeting. In this case, the LGO found the Council was at fault in respect of the handling of a planning application but that the apology that had already been provided by the Council to the complainant was sufficient remedy. This can be seen at Appendix 1.

### ***Formal Complaints***

- 3.6 In terms of complaints that have gone to stage 2 of the Council's own complaints procedure (which is the step before an Ombudsman complaint) we have had 0 complaints upheld in the municipal year 2023/24 to date.

### ***Data Protection***

- 3.7 The Data Protection Policy was updated and approved at the last meeting of this Committee. There have been no significant data breaches that require reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office or to the data subjects.

### ***Work programme***

- 3.8 The work programme for 2023/24 is set out below:

#### ***8 June 2023***

- Setting of work programme - COMPLETED

#### ***14 September 2023***

- Review of Conduct/Complaints/Work Programme – COMPLETED
- Annual report of the Local Government Ombudsman – COMPLETED
- Elections report post May 2023 elections – COMPLETED
- Data Protection report – COMPLETED

#### ***23 November 2023***

- Review of Conduct/Complaints/Work Programme – ON AGENDA
- Elections Act 2022 update – ON AGENDA
- Health and Safety Policy Update – NEW ITEM – ON AGENDA

#### ***25 January 2024***

- Review of Conduct/Complaints/Work Programme
- Elections Act 2022 Update

#### ***28 March 2024***

- Annual Corporate Health and Safety Update
- Review of Conduct/Complaints/Work Programme
- Employment trends

If Members have any items they wish to add to the work programme they should let the Monitoring Officer know. A report updating on progress against this programme will come to each meeting of the Committee and identifying any potential additional items or changes to the programme.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1** That the Standards and Resources Committee notes the contents of the update on Code of Conduct and Complaint Matters.

Report prepared by: Lorraine Fowkes – Corporate Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)



31 July 2023

**Complaint reference:**  
22 015 444

**Complaint against:**  
South Staffordshire District Council

## The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Mr B says the Council wrongly accepted a planning application without an accurate title, failed to notify him of changes to the application and failed to consider how two applications would impact on his amenity. There is no fault in the Council accepting the first application or in how it considered how the development would impact on Mr B. The Council was at fault for not consulting Mr B on amended plans. The remedy the Council has already put in place is satisfactory.

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## The complaint

1. The complainant, whom I shall refer to as Mr B, complained the Council:
  - accepted a planning application when it did not have an accurate title;
  - wrongly failed to tell him about changes to the application;
  - failed to consider the impact the development would have on him when granting two planning permissions.
2. Mr B says fault by the Council has resulted in him losing privacy and prevented him objecting to the application.

## The Ombudsman's role and powers

3. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word fault to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. I refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended*)
4. We consider whether there was fault in the way an organisation made its decision. If there was no fault in the decision making, we cannot question the outcome. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 34(3), as amended*)
5. If we are satisfied with an organisation's actions or proposed actions, we can complete our investigation and issue a decision statement. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 30(1B) and 34H(i), as amended*)

## How I considered this complaint

6. As part of the investigation, I have:

- 
- considered the complaint and Mr B's comments;
  - made enquiries of the Council and considered the comments and documents the Council provided.
7. Mr B and the organisation had an opportunity to comment on my draft decision. I considered any comments received before making a final decision.

## **What I found**

### **What should have happened**

8. Before publicising and consulting on an application, the local planning authority should be satisfied the description of development provided by the applicant is accurate. The local planning authority should not amend the description of development without first discussing any revised wording with the applicant or their agent. Checking the accuracy of the description of development should not delay validation of an application.
9. Government guidance is clear an application can be amended after it has been submitted. Where an application has been amended it is up to the local planning authority to decide whether further publicity and consultation is necessary in the interests of fairness. In deciding what further steps may be required local planning authorities should consider whether, without re-consultation, any of those who were entitled to be consulted on the application would be deprived of the opportunity to make any representations that they may have wanted to make on the application as amended.

### **What happened**

10. The Council received a planning application for a development involving various extensions on a site which is adjacent to Mr B's property. The Council consulted neighbours, including Mr B, on the application. At that point the extension closest to Mr B's property was single storey. Mr B says he viewed the plans on the Council's website and did not have any concerns as the single storey extension would not be visible above the fence line. He therefore did not object to the application.
11. One month after receiving the original application the Council received amended plans. Those amended plans changed the part of the extension closest to Mr B's property from single storey to two storey. The Council did not consult on those amendments and granted planning permission.
12. When the applicant began building the development Mr B raised concerns with the Council as it did not appear the development was the same as the one he had been consulted on. An enforcement officer visited the site and identified additional changes from the approved plans. The enforcement officer asked the applicant to put in a retrospective planning application. When the Council received the retrospective planning application it consulted neighbours, including Mr B. Mr B put in objections, particularly about the impact of overlooking from the window at first floor level. The Council granted planning permission for the development.
13. When responding to Mr B's complaint the Council accepted in this case it should have reconsulted neighbours on the amended plans. The Council did not consider this affected the decision. The Council apologised and, following a planning service review, agreed to routinely reconsult neighbours on amended plans. The Council has introduced a new procedure for that.



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## Analysis

14. Mr B says the Council accepted a planning application from his neighbour when the description of the development was not accurate and did not change when the proposed development changed. As I say in paragraph 8, Government guidance is clear the Council should be satisfied the applicant's description of the development is accurate. In this case the description of the development for the first planning application was 'the erection of various extensions.' I understand Mr B's concern given the original plans for the application proposed a single storey extension to the rear, next to his garden and this was later amended to a two storey extension and the description of the development did not change. However, as the description of the development did not say anything about whether the extensions were single or two storey I do not consider the description is affected by the amended plans. It is usual to see a description of a development which includes more information about the proposal. However, I do not consider it warrants a finding of fault in this case given what was originally proposed was various extensions and that did not change. In those circumstances I see no reason why the Council would have sought a different description of the development.
15. In reaching that view I note Mr B questions whether the Planning Committee that granted planning permission could understand what was being proposed given the vague description for the development. I am satisfied though as well as the description of the development officers also presented the Committee with plans for the development at the Committee meeting. I am satisfied that would have allowed Members to understand the types of extensions proposed. I therefore have no grounds to criticise the Council.
16. The Council accepts when it received amended plans for the development it should have reconsulted neighbours previously notified. I agree the Council should have reconsulted in this case because the amended plans did not show only minor amendments as it changed the type of extension closest to Mr B's property from single storey to two storey. Failure to consult neighbours on the amended plans is fault.
17. I appreciate the Council says the amended plans were available for residents to view on the Council's website. However, given Mr B objected to the later application and did not object to the original single storey proposal I consider it likely he had checked the plans on the website before the amended plans were received. I see no reason for Mr B to check the website again given he had no concern about the impact of the original plans and the Council had not told him the plans had changed. Failing to consult Mr B on the plans therefore denied him the opportunity to object to the application. I consider it likely he would have objected given he raised concerns about the development once his neighbour began building and as he objected to the later retrospective application.
18. Mr B says in granting the two planning permissions the Council failed to consider how the development would impact on his amenity. Mr B says as a result there is now a two-storey extension overshadowing the bottom of his garden and creating overlooking of his property.
19. For the first application I note the report records the officer's view there would not be any impact on Mr B's property. However, there is no explanation in the report about why the officer took that view. I would normally expect the planning report to record the reasons for the officer taking that view, referring to things like the distance between the two properties, whether the properties face each other and

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whether there is any direct window to window overlooking. Having considered the plans showing the relationship between the development and Mr B's property though I consider it likely the Council would not have considered the impact on Mr B so significant as to warrant refusal of the application or any amendments to it. I say that because I note the two properties do not directly face each other and the two-storey extension runs sideways along the bottom of Mr B's boundary. In those circumstances although there may be overshadowing of the bottom part of Mr B's garden I do not consider it likely, on the balance of probability, the officer would have considered that unacceptable in planning terms.

20. Given the relationship between the two properties I also consider it unlikely the Council would have considered the window to cause unacceptable overlooking of Mr B's property given the window does not face his property but instead faces down the length of the neighbour's garden. So, while I consider the Council should have included more detail about its reasoning in the report I do not consider it likely this affected the decision to approve the application. For the same reason I do not consider it likely, on the balance of probability, if Mr B had objected to the application it would have affected the decision.
21. For the second application, which is the one Mr B objected to, I am satisfied there is more explanation in the report about why the officer considered the development acceptable in terms of its impact on Mr B's amenity. I note the report set out Mr B's objection, which was mainly around overlooking from the first floor window. I am also satisfied the report set out the officer's view as to why she did not consider the impact the development would have on Mr B's property unacceptable. In particular, I note the report refers to the height of the window and the fact it does not directly overlook the flank sidewall of any neighbouring properties. I appreciate this is a view with which Mr B may disagree. However, as I said in paragraph 4, it is not my role to comment on the merits of a decision reached without fault. In this case the report for the application clearly set out why the officer considered the impact on Mr B's amenity acceptable in planning terms. As that view was also reached after visiting the site where the officer could view the development as built, there are no grounds on which I could criticise it.
22. I welcome that the Council has now introduced a procedure to ensure neighbours are consulted when amended plans are received. However, I consider the Council's failure to reconsult Mr B denied him the opportunity of objecting to the first application. As I do not consider it likely if Mr B had objected it would have changed the outcome I consider the apology the Council has already offered Mr B, alongside the change in procedure, satisfactory remedy.

## **Final decision**

23. I have completed my investigation and found fault by the Council which caused Mr B an injustice. I am satisfied the action the Council has already taken has remedied Mr B's injustice.

## **Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman**