

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

2018/19  
Decision No.  
2086

### Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 4 February 2019

<b>Portfolio</b>	Policy & Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Leisure and Corporate Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Dynamic, prudent and progressive Council

#### **Purpose:**

This report provides details of a proposed policy for dealing with unreasonable complaint behaviour.

The Council received a large number of customer enquiries, with most being dealt with quickly and effectively and with a positive outcome for the customer. Occasionally, however, a customer may be dissatisfied with our response or the outcome to their enquiry, at which point they can escalate their complaint using the Council's corporate complaints procedure. A copy of this procedure is attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Council's complaints procedure explains how customers can make a complaint and the procedure that will be followed. At stage one of the complaint procedure, the Head of Service in the department responsible for the service will investigate the complaint. If the complainant is unhappy with the response, the complaint can be escalated to stage two of the process, where the Director of the department responsible for the service will review the complaint.

If the customer remains unhappy with the stage two response, they can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for an independent review.

Whilst the Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, on occasion, our employees may have to deal with unreasonable, persistent or vexatious behaviour from our customers.

The LGSCO provides guidance notes to help local authorities and other bodies within their jurisdiction develop a proportionate approach when responding to unreasonable complaint behaviour, based on their view of good practice with these complainants.

The LGSCO provides the following definition of unreasonable complaint behaviour:

*Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contact with an organisation, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's complaints.*

As well as taking up a lot of officer time, on occasion, the behaviour of the complainant may be rude, derogatory, sarcastic or threatening. Whilst this type of behaviour happens rarely, a policy has been produced using the LGSCO's definition of unreasonable complaint behaviour together with their guidance. This policy will ensure that the Council's customers, employees and Councillors understand how the Council will deal with the complaints of this nature.

**Options Considered:**

As recommendation.

**Decision:**

RESOLVED that the Executive adopts the Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

**Reason:**

The Council does not currently have a policy for dealing with unreasonable complaint behaviour. The adoption of this policy will help deal with complaints of this nature, whilst also protecting the wellbeing of the Council's employees.

**Confirmed as a true record:**

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)  
Monday, 4 February 2019