

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board– 16 March 2015

DRAFT Corporate Complaints Process

Report of the Performance Lead

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams)

1. Executive Summary

This paper outlines the proposal to make changes to, and improve, the complaints procedure for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) and to bring these together as one process. Whilst the councils now share a single workforce and in a number of cases share the same customers both Councils currently have different complaints procedures. This can be confusing for both staff and customers.

We aim to ensure there is a consistent approach to complaints across the councils and that all complaints are treated seriously and sympathetically and are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

These draft procedures also seek to incorporate the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2012 with regard to how housing-related complaints should be handled, where the Council is the Landlord (this element will be TDBC specific as WSC does not have its own housing stock).

Your comments concerning the attached draft are sought in order to shape the final draft.

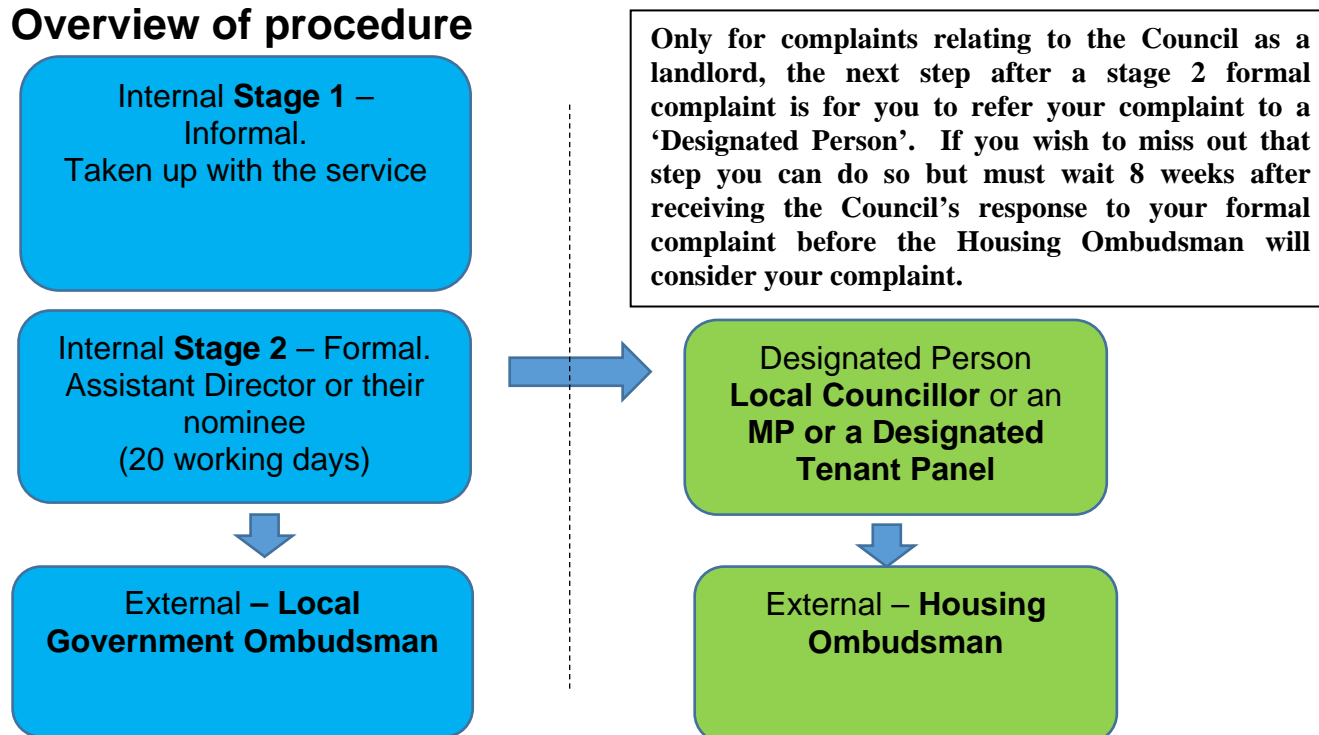
2. Introduction

- 2.1 Since 1st February 2015 Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council have shared a single workforce under a single Chief Executive and management team.
- 2.2 Currently both Councils have separate complaints procedures, neither of which have been reviewed for several years.
- 2.3 The Councils in many cases share the same customers (e.g. businesses trading in both areas and customers owning properties in both areas).
- 2.4 The Localism Act 2011 and Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2012 introduced specific requirements regarding the handling of housing-related complaints which were introduced from 1st April 2013 but which are presently not reflected in the current TDBC procedure.
- 2.5 We aim to develop a common complaints procedure for both councils which properly reflects the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and ensures there is a consistent approach to complaints across the councils.
- 2.6 The new procedure defines a complaint as *“When someone tells us they are not happy about a service or something we have or have not done that has had an impact upon them”*.

3. Summary of Procedure

- 3.1 The full procedure is described in the accompanying document. However, an overview of the process is described below.

Overview of procedure



- 3.2 The stages on the right hand side (shaded in green) are new stages introduced by the Localism Act.
- 3.3 We have also taken the opportunity to review the timescales within which complaints are responded to.
- 3.4 TDBC have previously aimed to provide a substantive response (not just an acknowledgement) to a complaint within 10 days. It has become clear that this target is in many cases unrealistic, for example in complex matters, where a number of officers need to be consulted or where a key officer is away from the office on leave or through sickness absence for example.
- 3.5 The proposed procedure seeks to introduce a more realistic timescale and bring it into line with the statutory timescale for responding to Freedom of Information requests, the timescale for which is 20 working days. That is not to say that all responses to a formal complaint will take 20 working days, often the response will be much quicker, but it simply sets a hard stop date.
- 3.6 Response times to corporate complaints will be monitored and reported to JMT, Scrutiny and the Executive/Cabinet at both councils quarterly as part of our performance management framework. Response times to housing related complaints will be monitored and reported to the Tenant Services Management Board and will be published to all tenants on an annual basis.

4. Localism Act

- 4.1 From 1 April 2013, the Localism Act 2011 (The Act) put in place new arrangements for dealing with complaints by social tenants against their landlords.

- 4.2 The Act also introduces 'designated persons', sometimes also known as 'the democratic filter'.
- 4.3 A designated person will help resolve the complaint after it has been through the Council's internal process but before it passes to the Ombudsman. Designated persons were introduced by the Government to improve the chances of complaints about housing being resolved locally.
- 4.4 Designated persons are:
1. A member of the House of Commons;
 2. A member of the local housing authority for the district in which the property concerned is located (eg TDBC Councillor)
- Or it can be a designated tenant panel for a social landlord. Landlords do not have to set up tenant panels but they are expected to support their formation and activities if their tenants want them.
- 4.5 Relatively few landlords have set up a tenant panel for this purpose. Nationally only around 70 have been registered with the Housing Ombudsman as at 9th March 2015 when their website was checked (these are listed at Appendix A). To put this number in perspective this equates to 3% of social landlords. It should also be noted that some panels have been disbanded at the request of tenants as they were found to be infrequently used and ineffective in terms of time and resources needed compared to what they actually achieved. The Tenant Empowerment Manager in discussions with other Somerset based social landlords has found that no other local provider has a tenant panel, they identify their designated person as a Councillor or MP.
- 4.6 If TDBC tenants chose to set up a Tenants Panel for complaints based, on the figure for number of Ombudsman complaints referred to Housing Services in 2013/2014, it would appear that a Panel could potentially deal with 3 complaints a year.
- 4.7 Also from the 1 April 2013 The Housing Ombudsman Scheme was established.
- 4.8 A designated person will help resolve the complaint in one of two ways; they can try and resolve the complaint themselves or they can refer the complaint straight to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- 4.9 If they refuse to do either the tenant can contact the Housing Ombudsman themselves.
- 4.10 The designated person can try to put things right in whichever way they think may work best. If the problem is still not resolved following the intervention of the designated person either they or the tenant can refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- 4.11 Complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service do not have to be referred by a designated person. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service but only after exhausting the landlords own complaint procedure and once at least 8 weeks has elapsed from the end of the landlord's complaint process.
- 4.12 The Housing Ombudsman is keen to see all complaints resolved locally and makes the following recommendations:

"Early and local resolution is the best possible outcome to a complaint. We will encourage positive relationships between landlords and tenants and the designated persons to achieve this. We will also provide information and advice to support designated persons in improving the methods and approaches they might use to resolve a dispute." (Housing Ombudsman

Service Dec 2012 Designated Persons).

5 Links with Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England 2012

- 5.1 The regulatory framework for social housing places specific expectations on registered social housing providers of which, of course, TDBC is one. The Consumer Standard contained the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard which includes provisions for more local resolution of complaints and disputes.
- 5.2 Under the new arrangements for regulation MPs and elected councillors have a more prominent role in scrutinising landlords overall, hence the Localism Act drawing these MPs and Members into the complaint resolution process.
- 5.3 In relation to complaints, the framework requires social housing providers to:
- **offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint** – the draft procedure provides a number of ways in which to make a complaint. These are set on pages 4 and 5 of the draft procedure;
 - **set out clear service standards for responding to complaints** -the draft sets out the timescales in which complaints will be handled;
 - **details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint** - the draft provides this information.
 - **accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf** - this is part of the draft procedure and is described on page 4 of the draft.
- 5.4 **Providers shall also inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints** – in order to support the complaints process an improved central complaints management system will be put in place. This will enable statistics relating to the number and subject of complaint to be recorded and extracted so that any trends can be identified and any mitigation necessary can be put in place. Details about complaints are also published in the Annual Report that is sent and available to every tenant.

6. Finance Comments

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications linked to this report. However, poor handling of complaints and poor service delivery can lead to the Ombudsman recommending financial redress to the complainant.

7. Legal Comments

- 7.1 The Localism Act 2011 places certain obligations upon the Council in its capacity of social landlord in relation to complaint handling, described earlier in this report.

8. Links to Corporate Aims

- 8.1 This report has no direct link to corporate aims.

9. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no direct implications.

10. Equalities Impact

10.1 Equalities impact has been considered in relation to this report. A wide range of methods of complaint have been included within the draft procedure including by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's in order to remove as many barriers as possible.

Should this draft procedure ultimately be adopted, work will have to be undertaken by the housing team to ensure tenants are made aware of the complaints process, specifically including the role of the Housing Ombudsman and the Designated Persons. As is usual, any written communications will be available in other languages as well as in Braille should that be requested by the complainant.

11. Risk Management

11.1 There is the risk that if the Council fails to have an appropriate complaints process in place it will not identify areas needing improvement and public support for the organisation could weaken.

12. Partnership Implications

12.1 The complaints procedure would include complaints made about services delivered by partners and contractors on our behalf and would apply after the partnership or contractor had been given an opportunity to respond to the matter.

13. Recommendations

13.1 The board is recommended to:

- Support the approach set out in the draft complaints procedure;
- Consider whether to form a tenants panel (should a panel be formed at a later date the complaints procedure can be updated to reflect this);
- Comment as necessary on any areas of the draft procure which require modification as part of the creation of the final draft.

Contact:

Paul Harding

Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager

01823 356507

Ext: 2616

p.harding@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Tenant panels registered with the Housing Ombudsman as at 9th March 2015.

Tenant Panels	
Member Landlord	Tenant Panel Name
Adactus Housing Group	Adactus Housing Group Tenant Panel
Adur District Council	Adur District Council Designated Tenant Panel
Anchor Trust	Anchor Trust Customer Complaints Panel
Ashfield District Council's Alms Length Management Organisation, Ashfield Homes Ltd	Ashfield Federation of Tenants & Residents Association (AFTRA)
Aster Communities/Synergy Housing	Designated Tenants Complaints Panel
B3 Living Ltd	B3Living Designated Tenants Panel
Barnet Homes	Barnet Homes Tenant Panel
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Barnsley Federation of Tenants and Residents
Bromford Housing Group Limited	Bromford Housing Group Tenant Panel
Cheltenham Borough Homes	Cheltenham Borough Homes Tenant Panel
Churches Housing Association of Dudley District (CHADD), Harborne Parish Lands, Lench's Trust, Redditch Friends Housing Association, St Peters Housing Association, Nehemiah UCHA	The Central Resident's Complaints Panel
Circle Housing Wherry	Way Ahead With Wherry Tenant Panel
City of Stoke on Trent	City of Stoke Complaints Panel
Coast & Country Housing Ltd	Coast & Country Designated Review Panel
Cobalt Housing Association	Independent Complaints Panel for Cobalt Tenants
Community Gateway Association	Complaints Action Group
Cross Keys Homes	Cross Keys Homes Scrutiny Panel
Croydon Council	Croydon Council Complaints Panel
Darlington Borough Council	Darlington Complaint Tenant Panel
Daventry & District Housing	Daventry & District Housing Tenant Complaints Panel
Derby Homes	Derby Homes Customer Complaints Panel
Derwent Living (Tuntum Housing & Gedling Homes)	Independent Complaints Panel
Derwentside Homes	Derwentside Homes Scrutiny Panel
Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes Association	Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association Independent Tenants Panel
East Devon District Council	East Devon District Council Designated Tenant Panel
Family Mosaic	Family Mosaic Tenant Panel
Futures Homescape	Futures Homescape Tenant Complaints Panel
Grand Union Housing Group	Grand Union Housing Group Designated Tenant Panel
Gravesham Borough Council	Gravesham Borough Council Complaints Panel
Guildford Borough Council	The Review Group
Hanover Housing Association	Hanover Tenant Panel
Haringey Council	Tenants Complaint Panel Homes for Haringey
Hastoe Housing Association/Hastoe Wyvern Housing Association	Hastoe Tenant Panel
Helena Partnerships	Helena Partnerships Customer Excellence Panel
Home Group Ltd	Home Group Independent Complaints Panel
Innisfree Housing Association Ltd	InnisFree Tenant Scrutiny Panel
Irwell Valley H A Ltd	Irwell Valley Designated Tenant Panel
Jephson Housing Association	Tenant Complaint Panel (South & West)
Jephson Housing Association	Tenant Complaint Panel (North)
Jephson Housing Association	Tenant Complaint Panel (Midlands)
Jephson Housing Association	Tenant Complaint Panel (East)
Kingston upon Hull City Council	Hull City Council Tenants Complaints Panel
Kirklees Council	Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (KFTRA)
Lincoln City Council	Lincoln Tenants Panel
Marches Housing Association	The Voice (Marches)
Medway Council	Medway Council Designated Person Panel
Mossbank Homes	Mossbank Tenant Panel
Mossclare Housing	Mossclare Tenant Panel
Nehemiah UCHA	The Central Resident's Complaints Panel
New Charter Housing Trust Group	Independent Tenant Solutions
Newark & Sherwood District Council	Newark and District Tenants Panel
Nottingham City Council	Tenant Complaint Panel
Nottingham City Homes	Nottingham City Homes Tenant Complaint Panel
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Complaints Panel
One Vision Housing (The Sovini Group)	Tenant Mediation Panel
Redbridge	Redbridge Housing Designated Complaints Tenants Panel
Riverside (The Riverside Group Ltd)	Riverside Tenants' and Residents' Panel
Rooftop Housing Group Ltd	Rooftop Housing Group Residents' Local Resolution Group Tenant Panel
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Rotherfed Designated Tenant Panel
Salford City Council	Independent Tenant Solutions
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)	SMBC Tenant Panel
Sheffield City Council	Sheffield Independent Tenant Complaints Panel
Shoreline Housing Partnership	Shoreline Housing Partnership Tenant Panel
Six Town Housing	Six Town Housing Tenant Panel
Soha Housing Ltd	Soha Housing Tenant Panel
Southway Housing Trust (Manchester) Ltd	Independent Tenant Solutions
Spectrum Housing Group	Spectrum Housing Group Tenant Panel
Stockport Homes	Stockport Homes Designated Tenant Panel
Suffolk Housing Society	Suffolk Housing Society Designated Tenant Panel
Swan Housing Association	Swan Housing Association Tenant Panel
Swindon Borough Council	Swindon Borough Council Tenant Panel
The Havebury Housing Partnership	The Havebury Housing Partnership Resident Complaint Group
Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust	Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust Designated Tenant Panel
Weaver Vale Housing Trust	Designated Complaints Panel
Westward Housing Group	Westward Housing Group Scrutiny Panel
Wrekin Housing Trust	Wrekin Housing Trust Designated Tenant Panel
Wythenshawe Community Housing Group	WCHG Tenants Complaints Panel



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Taunton Deane Borough Council
and West Somerset Council

Corporate Complaints Procedure

Applies from TBC

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1 Introduction

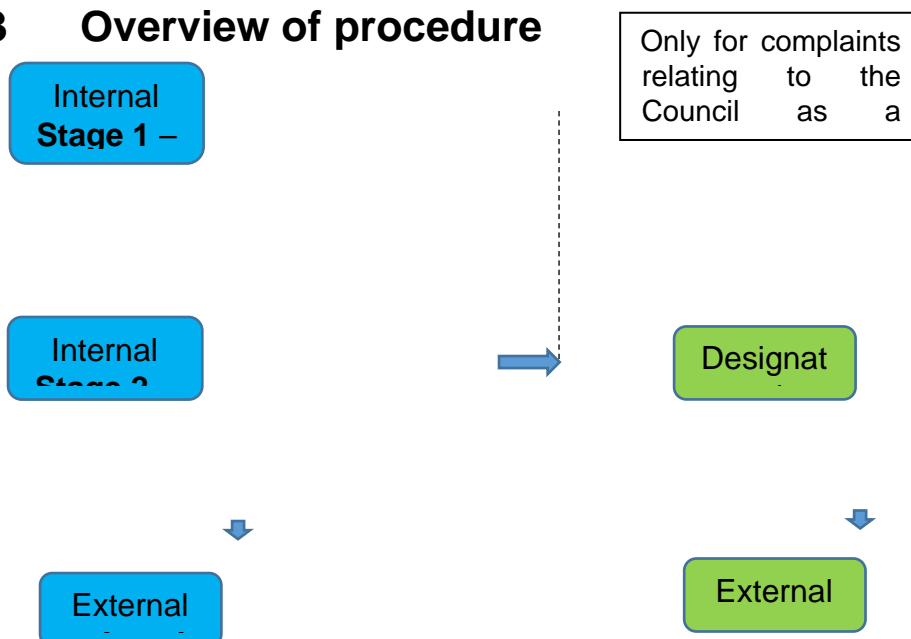
- 1.1 This procedure applies to both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. Reference to 'Council' applies to either organisation.
- 1.2 Whilst both Councils are independent, we share a joint management team and officer structure. Having the same procedure for handling complaints ensures a consistent approach to dealing with complaints which is particularly important given we share a number of mutual customers (for example businesses applying for licences and paying rates in both areas).
- 1.3 An effective complaint management process is an essential part of providing a quality service.
- 1.4 Having an effective process for managing complaints not only benefits the complainant, it can have real benefits for the organisation:
 - It provides free feedback on service delivery
 - It identifies areas needing improvement
 - It presents an early chance to put things right
 - It strengthens public support for the organisation

2 What is a complaint?

2.1 We define a complaint as:

“When someone tells us they are not happy about a service or something we have or have not done that has had an impact upon them”

3 Overview of procedure



4 Our Promise to you

4.1 We will:

- listen to you;
- investigate all complaints thoroughly;
- acknowledge and learn from our mistakes;
- say sorry when we get things wrong;
- do what we can to put things right quickly.

What we ask in return is that you treat our staff with respect.

5 What types of matters might a complaint be about?

- Failure by the Council or its contractors to provide the standard or quality of service promised by the Council.
- Dissatisfaction with the way the council policies are being applied or administered.
- Delays in responding to customer enquiries or requests.
- The treatment by, or unhelpful attitude of, a member of staff.
- Unlawful or unfair discrimination.

This list does not cover everything but provides a good idea of the kinds of complaints the Council might receive.

6 Areas not covered by our complaints procedure

- 6.1 Separate arrangements are in place for complaints about the conduct of Elected Members. To make a complaint about the conduct of a Taunton Deane or West Somerset Councillor, or a parish or town councillor within the areas covered by our two Councils, the complaint must be submitted in writing to:
The Monitoring Officer, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE.
- 6.2 Where a statutory right of appeal exists i.e. where there is a formal process in place to challenge a Council decision, these should be used rather than the complaints procedure. For example: appeals against planning decisions, housing benefit awards or car parking penalty notices. Customers disagreeing just with the decision itself should be advised to use the statutory appeals process and not the complaints system. Details of statutory rights of appeal will be available when decisions to which they apply are made. The only exception to this is a complaint made about the way in which the appeal process was handled, these should be dealt with by this process.

6.3 Complaints subject to legal proceedings

- a) If you have or intend to take legal action in relation to the substance of your complaint we may deal with your complaint unless we decide that consideration of your complaint will prejudice the conduct of those proceedings. We will take each decision based on the specific circumstances of the case.
- b) If we have started to look into your complaint we may put it on hold until after the legal proceedings have finished.

6.4 Insurance Claims

We will not usually look into your complaint if the issue is something which should be dealt with as an insurance claim against the Council.

7 Who can use the complaints procedure?

- 7.1 Anyone who is not happy about a service or something we have or have not done that has had an impact upon them.

8 Advocacy and representation

- 8.1 If you prefer a friend, relative or advocate to make the complaint on your behalf that is fine (this could include a District/Borough Councillor or a Member of Parliament). If someone is complaining on your behalf you must however tell us you have given your consent for them to act on your behalf (we will usually require this in writing). You need to be aware that we will share information with them necessary to deal with the complaint, as if we were dealing with you directly. This may mean sharing personal information with them.

9 How to make a complaint

- 9.1 Customers can make a complaint in any of the **six ways** described below. You should never be told '*you have to put it in writing*'; the choice is yours.

1

By filling in on-line complaint form on the website

Taunton Deane Borough Council: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

West Somerset Council: <http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/tellus>

2 By using the printed complaints leaflet available at the Councils offices

3 By email

Taunton Deane Borough Council:
enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk

West Somerset Council:
customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk

4 By letter

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Customer Services, Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House,
Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE

West Somerset Council

Customer Services, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, Taunton, TA4
4QA

5 By Telephone

Taunton Deane Borough Council: 01823 356356

West Somerset Council: 01643 703704

6 In person at the Councils offices.

10 Our Internal Complaints Process

STAGE **1 – Informal Complaint (Local Resolution)**

10.1 We will first try to deal with your complaint informally. If you are unhappy about the service you are receiving or have received, then the quickest way to let us know is by contacting the person or service you have been dealing with.

10.2 If you have not been dealing with one specific person, then ask to speak to someone in the service area you are concerned with.

- 10.3 You may then be referred to a line manager. You are entitled to speak to a line manager or supervisor and can ask to do this at any time. This person will then try to resolve the issue for you.
- 10.4 We aim to respond as quickly as possible to your concerns and normally within 10 working days. If we need to take longer, perhaps because the matter is very complicated or an officer who is best placed to respond to you is away from the office on leave for example, then we will let you know and keep you informed.

STAGE **2** – Formal Complaint

- 10.5 This stage is used if you are either not satisfied with the results of your informal complaint, or you wish to make your complaint formally from the beginning. If so, please make it clear that you wish your complaint to be treated formally.
- 10.6 What distinguishes a formal complaint from a matter that does not require escalation is not always easy to define. In many cases when a service failure is first reported we can simply rectify the mistake and resolve the issue without treating the case as a formal complaint, but we accept that some cases are serious enough to be treated as a formal complaint immediately. In some situations the case will be escalated because of the repeated failure of what would on its own be insignificant. If there is any doubt whether an issue should be treated as a complaint, the decision should lie with the customer.
- 10.7 Formal complaints will be investigated by the Assistant Director responsible for the service area to which your complaint relates, or by a senior officer appointed by him or her such as a service manager or team leader.
- 10.8 We will acknowledge your formal complaint within **3 working days** of its receipt. We aim to send you a full response within **20 working days**. We may need to agree to extend the timescales where key people are unavailable due to annual leave, sickness absence, or other commitments. However, this will be the exception and not the rule. If we can't give you a full response within the 20 working day target we will contact you and explain why.
- 10.9 Each complaint will be investigated in an open minded and impartial way. It is recognised that there can be no 'one size fits all' solution and responses will be proportionate to the complaint.

11 Putting things right

- 11.1 When you make a complaint we will ask you what you would like us to do to put things right.

- 11.2 If we uphold your complaint you can expect an apology and for us to put things right quickly. The aim is to put you back in the position you were in before the problem occurred. Although we will consider each complaint on its merits we will try to ensure we offer similar remedies for similar situations.
- 11.3 Remedies may include a review of our practices and procedures to ensure that the same thing does not happen again.

12 What if you are still unhappy

- 12.1 Whilst we aim to resolve complaints through our internal procedure we recognise that there will be occasions where the customer remains unhappy and may wish to take the matter further.
- 12.2 After the internal complaints procedure, described above, has been completed you have the option to take matters further.
- 12.3 If you remain dissatisfied with how we have dealt with your complaint, you may contact The Local Government Ombudsman (**however for certain housing complaints, where the Council is the landlord see 12.5 below, as there is a different route to be followed**)
- 12.4 The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent, impartial and free service. The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about Councils.

You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman per the details below:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614 (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm)

Website: **www.lgo.org.uk**

- 12.5 For complaints relating to housing that is owned and/or managed by the Council, if the Council cannot put things right, after stage two of the Councils complaints procedure, the next step is for you to contact an MP or a local councillor - these are two types of 'Designated Person' as described within the Localism Act 2011.
- 12.6 Designated Persons are there to help to resolve disputes between tenants and their landlords. They can do this in whatever way they think is most likely to work.
- 12.7 If the Designated Person cannot help they can refer a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

12.8 Complaints to the Housing Ombudsman do not however have to be referred by a Designated Person, but if they are not there must be at least 8 weeks from the end of the Council's internal complaint process before the Housing Ombudsman can consider the case

12.9 You can find out who your local Councillor is online, by telephone or by enquiring at the Council's offices.

Taunton Deane

Call: 01823 356356

Online at: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

West Somerset

Call: 01643 703704

Online at: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

12.10 You can find out who your local Member of Parliament is by enquiring at the Council's offices or by calling:

Taunton Deane

Call: 01823 356356

West Somerset

Call: 01643 703704

If you prefer to contact a different Member of Parliament, contact details are available from:

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA or by searching online at www.parliament.uk

12.11 The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted as below:

The Housing Ombudsman
Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Tel: 0330 111 3000

Website: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

12.12 Appendix A to this document gives examples of housing related matters that might be the subject of a complaint and which Ombudsman would ultimately deal with them.

12.13 In responding to you as part of our stage two complaint process we will advise you of the next external steps available to you.

13 Monitoring our performance

- 13.1 Our performance in handling complaints will be monitored and reported quarterly to the Council's management team, Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet / Executive as part of our performance management framework.
- 13.2 The three key measures we will use relating to complaints will be:
- The number of formal complaints received;
 - The percentage of complaints received where a full response is provided to the complaint within 20 working days;
 - The number of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman.

Appendix A

HOUSING RELATED COMPLAINTS AND THE OMBUDSMAN

Housing related complaints referred to the [Housing Ombudsman](#)

The Housing Ombudsman considers complaints about housing associations and local housing authorities relating to the matters below:

Leasehold services

- Shared ownership and sales processes for leasehold properties
- Shared ownership stair-casing
- Full ownership and sales processes for leasehold properties owned by housing associations
- Right to buy and right to acquire for tenants of housing associations
- Repair responsibilities under the lease
- Mortgage rescue schemes
- Leasehold services provided by the landlord

Moving to a property

- Transfer applications that are outside [Housing Act 1996 Part 6](#)
- Type of tenancy offered
- Mutual exchange
- Decision to renew a fixed tenancy
- Decants
- Mobility Schemes

Rent and service charges

- Rent or service charges

Occupancy rights

- Terms and conditions of occupancy rights
- Succession
- Assignment
- Ending a tenancy (eg notice periods)
- Abandonment of property
- Possession proceedings

Property condition – repairs and improvements

- Condition of the property when first let (eg void works)
- Responsive repairs

- Planned maintenance or cyclical works
- Improvement works carried out by landlord or tenant
- Rechargeable repairs
- Disabled adaptations

Tenant behaviour

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise nuisance
- Harassment

Estate management

- Cleaning or repairs of communal areas
- Boundary issues
- Grounds maintenance
- Parking
- Use of communal areas

Complaint handling

- The landlord's handling of a complaint in their complaint process, including delays

Compensation

- Home loss or disturbance payments
- Improvements carried out by the tenant
- Payment for damage to property or tenants belongings
- Discretionary payments

Housing related complaints referred to the [Local Government Ombudsman](#)

The Local Government Ombudsman considers complaints about housing associations and local housing authorities relating to the matters below:

Housing allocations under [Housing Act 1996 Part 6](#)

- Applications for re-housing that meet the reasonable preference criteria (dealt with by the local housing authority or any other body acting on its behalf, which could include a housing association). Includes complaints about:
 - Assessment of such applications, the award of points, banding or a decision that the application does not qualify for reasonable preference
 - Operation of choice based lettings schemes and about the suitability of accommodation offered under those schemes.

Homelessness under Housing Act 1996 Part 7

- Applications for assistance under the homelessness legislation (dealt with by the local housing authority or any other body acting on its behalf, which could include a housing association). Includes complaints about:
 - Homelessness advice and homelessness prevention activities
 - How applications are dealt with and decisions about eligibility for and allocation of interim and temporary accommodation.

General housing advice

- General advice from the local authority about housing options
- Handling of reports from tenants of private landlords about unlawful eviction, harassment and other matters

Housing improvement grants

- Applications for mandatory and discretionary housing improvement grants. Includes complaints about:
 - Provision of advice, processing of applications, preparation of schedules of work, payment of grant and other decisions on grant eligibility and entitlement
 - Actions of social services occupational therapy services with regard to assessment and eligibility for disabled facilities grant

Antisocial behaviour

- Antisocial behaviour which does not fall within the remit of a social landlord.

Noise nuisance

- Reports of statutory noise and other nuisance to environmental health services

Sale or disposal of land on housing estates

- Applications or requests to buy parcels of land owned by local authorities
- Sales processes for properties owned by local authorities
- Right to buy and right to acquire for tenants of local authorities

TDBC and WSC Complaints Procedure