

Addendum to Annual Complaints Self-Assessment (Item 6)

2.1 This self-assessment process is a new statutory requirement. Its purpose is to check that our complaints process is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice.. Part of the new requirement is that the assessment is presented and then published on the Council website. It should be noted that this assessment is only looking at the process we use and does not cover reporting on actual complaints received. In future years we will bring this self-assessment for scrutiny alongside the Annual Customer Feedback Report so that information on both the process and on complaints and feedback received is presented at the same time. The Annual Customer Feedback Report for this year was presented to this committee in July 2024

4.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures social housing landlords should have in place for considering complaints. It also placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the code of practice it issued.

The Housing Ombudsman consulted on having a joint Complaint Handling Code with the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman in 2023-24 but ultimately the Ombudsmen decided that two separate codes would continue to be used.

The Housing Ombudsman issued a statutory Code, effective from 1 April 2024, and the duty of the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance commenced at the same time.

Paragraphs 9-12 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme set out the membership obligations to which all social housing landlords must adhere. Paragraph 9b specifies that landlords must establish and maintain a complaints procedure in accordance with the Code.

Member approval of the self-assessment is needed by 29 November 2024 to ensure Cambridge City Council are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's statutory code of practise. This is an out of cycle requirement for this year only as a consequence of the date the new code was introduced.

The Customer Feedback Report will continue to cover all services offered by the Council, but the sections of the report relating to Housing services will be extracted and presented at a Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting in addition to the main report being presented to Strategy & Resources.

It is worth noting that to ensure we adhere to the highest standards of complaints monitoring, and to ensure officers have a consistent process to follow, we used the Housing Ombudsman's self-assessment as the

benchmark for our corporate complaints procedure applying the requirements to all aspects of our complaints process.

The full self-assessment can be found in Appendix 1.1