London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	*Update on Corporate Complaints & MEQs*
Report to:	*General Purposes Committee*
Date of Meeting:	*16th March 2023*
Cabinet Member:	*Cllr Tim Leaver*
Directors:	*Fay Hammond*
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Classification:	Part I Public

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to the General Purposes Committee (GPC) request in October 2022 to provide:

    - A progress updates on corporate complaints improvement actions as detailed in the Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2021-22.
    - An in-year progress updated regarding Member Enquiry performance

Recommendations

> I. To note progress updates on corporate complaints learning actions and in-year performance for MEQs as requested by the Committee.

Background and Options

1. In October 2022, the Council's Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2021-22 was presented to GPC. The Committee requested a progress update on improvement actions identified as part of the Report's complaints learning.

Additionally, GPC requested an in-year progress update on Member Enquiry (MEQ) performance which is also included in this report.

2. The progress report for both items is attached to this covering report. However, for ease of reference a summary for each is provided below.

Corporate Complaints – Improvement Action Progress Summary

3. The [Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2021-22](#) detailed improvement actions for 5 service areas as follows:
    - Council Housing Repairs Service
    - Housing Advisory Service
    - Waste Operations
    - Financial Assessments and Income & Debt Service
    - Response timescale performance

4. Good progress has been made in implementing these actions with many completed and a small number still underway. During this process, each area has identified subsequent improvement actions which are either underway or planned for future implementation. Further detail can be found in the accompanying progress report. A Corporate Complaints audit is currently underway which will also enhance improvement actions regarding complaint handling and learning. Findings and recommendations are expected in April 2023.

Member Enquiries (MEQs) Performance Progress Summary

5. This section in the accompanying report provides in-year data analysis of MEQ performance between May and December 2022.

6. 4,334 MEQs were submitted by Members and MPs during that period. The highest volume areas were:
    - Street cleansing (247 MEQs)
    - Parks and cemeteries (244 MEQs)
    - Highway maintenance/roads and pavements (173 MEQs)
    - Planning enforcement & commercial nuisance (157 MEQs)
    - Trees: Highways and Council Housing/parks (153 MEQs)

7. 78% (3,359) were responded to on time (within 8 working days), falling short of Enfield Council's KPI target of 95% on time response rate.

8. The majority of late responses (53%) were 1-5 days late. In absolute numbers, parks & cemeteries maintenance MEQs had the largest number of late responses (97). This was followed by street cleansing (73). Council Housing Repairs was third, but significantly less in terms of volume (38) compared to the previous two.

9. Member response rejection analysis identified that in absolute numbers, parks and cemeteries also received the highest number of rejections (34). Reasons were primarily due to response quality, for example insufficient detail or failure to answer all points raised.

10. More detailed analysis is available in the accompanying report. However, parks and cemeteries maintenance remains a concern regarding both response time performance and Member rejections. Street cleansing MEQ volumes are also high and challenges regarding timely response.

11. The accompanying report lists a number of improvement actions currently underway to improver MEQ performance and quality. Notably for parks & cemeteries maintenance and street cleansing, a service review is currently underway which has implemented a number of improvement actions such as increasing town centre street cleansing resource and dedicated litter bin teams. Other improvements are currently under implementation, such as redesign of administrative resource to improve MEQ response times and increase supervisor capacity. Additionally, actions to improve MEQ response across the organisation are also underway including departmental quality reporting and MEQ response training and guides for officers.

IT MEQ System Enhancements – Progress Update

12. Further progress has been made since the previous GPC update. Namely all major enhancements have now been implemented. Some minor enhancements are ongoing. For a breakdown of enhancements and implementation progress, please see the appendix to this report.

13. Demonstrations of the new enhancements to political groups are underway and due to complete end of March. User one-to-one support sessions remain available.

14. The new technology has enhanced reporting data, which in turn supports improved insight and analysis as reflected in the accompany in-year progress report for MEQs.

Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies

15. Analysis and learning from complaints and MEQ performance provides valuable insight into customer experience. Progress reporting on improvement initiatives resulting from past complaints strengthens transparency regarding the Council's initiatives to improve service delivery. It also demonstrates progress against improvement commitments made in the Annual Corporate Complaints report.

Financial Implications

16. None

Legal Implications

17. None

Equalities Implications

18. As part of the Council's complaint handling procedures, complaint channels must be accessible to all customers, residents and Members. The organisation must ensure that all complaints are dealt with equally, and that any equalities information provided by the complainant is not visible to responding officers. This report supports the Council's Corporate Complaints policy by providing accessible progress update on complaint learning improvements to everyone, including all within the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

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Accompanying Paper:

- GPC In-Year Progress Report: Complaint Learning Improvement Actions & MEQ Performance (March 2023)

Appendix: MEQ IT System Enhancement – Progress Update (March 2023)

Enhancements Completed:
- Copying in Cllrs into MEQs (available since 23/08/22)
- Include identifying information in MEQ email subject lines (resident's name, postcode & unique/casework ref no) (available since 23/08/22)
- System search & filter improvements (available since 10/11/22)
- Increase attachment size (available since 23/08/22)
- Member/officer communication functionality within system (available since 10/11/22)
- Drag and drop files as attachments (available since 10/01/23)
- Extend MEQ closure window from 5 to 20 working days (available since 13/07/22)
- MEQ category list – change running order (available since 14/09/22)
- Change status title of MEQ once officer response sent from 'awaiting MEQ response to 'pending Member review' (available since 11/11/22)

Enhancements - Ongoing:
- Changes to MEQ category names: user testing w/c 6/03/23
- Ask follow up question/more information in addition to accept/reject upon receipt of officer response: further testing expected w/c 6/03/23
- MEQ overdue email notifications to Members for MEQ responses due within 2 days and overdue: currently being developed by Digital Services
- Automatically add officer signature to MEQ response (Working with system supplier as this is currently not available. Feasibility, costs and timelines to be confirmed.
- Reduce MP email notifications: currently being developed by Digital Services. Awaiting test date confirmation.
- Resident response tick box confirming officer has responded directly to the resident: Digital Services investigating feasibility.
- Reduce MP email notifications: Digital Services investigating feasibility

- Archive closed cases: Digital Services investigating feasibility.
- Save button/draft function when writing MEQ initially: Digital Services investigating feasibility.