

All Members of the County Council

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Nina Wilton

WCS04535

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Dear Member

Re: Complaints to the County Council

You will be aware that the new Constitution includes a procedure for investigating complaints made about the Council's services. The post of Corporate Standards and Complaints Officer has been created to help support the complaints investigation function, and I was appointed on 15 July.

The complaints procedure consists of three stages:

- Stage 1 – an informal complaint resolved at local team level without need for extensive investigation
- Stage 2 – a formal complaint that is investigated by a departmental complaints officer, who makes a report on their findings, with recommendations
- Stage 3 – Review Panel, which is available to service users who are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response. The Review Panel consists of two independent Members of the Standards Committee, and one Member of Scrutiny Committee.

I am writing to you because I am aware that several Members have expressed a wish to be kept informed about matters that affect their own divisions. Further, a recent Review Panel recommended that Members be advised of serious complaints that arise in their individual constituencies, and Chief Officers have endorsed this recommendation. I therefore propose to advise Members of Stage 3 complaints that are made by residents of their division. The relevant Cabinet portfolio holder would also be advised of the complaint. I also propose to advise local Members and appropriate portfolio holders of complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman.

I would also be grateful if Members would let me know of any complaints that they receive from service users. The complaint can then be logged on a complaints tracking system. The purpose of logging complaints in this way is that it provides an automated format that ensures that complaints are responded to within the timescales set out in the Constitution. It also provides very useful

management information about the nature of complaints; it identifies recurrent themes and “hot spots”. This information can be used to inform policy.

If you have any concerns about either of these proposals, please let me know. My direct line is 01225 713078, or I can be contacted by e-mail on ninawilton@wiltshire.gov.uk. If you would like to see the complaints tracking system in action, or if you have any questions at all, you are very welcome to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nina Wilton
Corporate Standards and Complaints Officer