

**EXECUTIVE – 8 NOVEMBER 2007****REVISED CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE****Report of the Head of Improvement Unit****Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1999**

**Financial Implications:** None at the present time. But to consider value for money at all times.

**Purpose:** To advise Executive of the revised complaints procedure and leaflet. The Corporate Complaints Procedure will link to CP5- Accessible Council and also CP6- Value for Money Council priorities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Executive agree the revised complaints procedure and leaflet provided in appendix one.**

**Background / The Issues**

1. The current Corporate Complaints procedure provides the opportunity for the complainant to proceed through three stages if it is felt that their complaint has not been dealt with fairly. The Corporate Complaints procedure has now been reviewed and streamlined to improve the way complaints are dealt with and will now operate using a two stage approach.
2. The difference between the version that has been included within appendix one to the previous version:
  - Process now has two stages instead of three. Head of Service will confirm and sign off response at stage one and if complaint proceeds to stage two the Strategic Director will confirm and sign off response. This will reinforce the message that the Council is corporately committed into resolving complaints effectively and minimising future complaints.
  - Where occurrences arise of racial incidents these will now be incorporated, as previously no formal approach to recording
  - Form developed for complainants to complete (optional) and send in by email, letter or in person
  - A web form will be developed which will provide electronic access
  - All services will monitor number of complaints on the Councils performance management system- Covalent. An overall figure will also be produced and reported via the Performance Indicator Balanced Scorecard.

### 3. Risk Assessment

Opportunity	Issues/obstacles	Benefits
As an Excellent authority we should continue to look at ways of improving service provision and work with customers and residents in resolving complaints in an effective way that helps to avoid future complaints.	If complaints are not handled correctly- South Hams District Council may not be fulfilling its duties and as a result may not be providing high quality basic services. This will in turn have a knock-on effect to the Council's reputation	Corporate Complaints Procedure in place- If complaints are handled correctly, the risk of financial penalties being imposed by the Ombudsman are reduced.

### Conclusion

The revised corporate complaints procedure will help to streamline the administration side of the procedure. It will also assist officers in determining whether it is a complaint and being aware of the corporate approach to dealing with complaints in an effective and efficient manner. Monitoring of complaints will take place and will be reported to senior management and will also appear on the performance indicator balanced scorecard reported to Informal Executive and Scrutiny and Overview.

Katie Stephens  
Corporate Improvement Officer

Executive  
8 November 2007

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Head of Improvement Unit

David Incoll  
Chief Executive