



## **Governing Body Response to the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Annual Report 2024/2025 and Self-Assessment 2025/26**

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### **Councillor Jane Riley – Portfolio Holder for Culture & Customers – Member Responsible for Complaints**

In line with statutory regulations, the Council has drafted its second self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code of April 2024 and an accompanying Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Annual Report. As Councillor and Portfolio Holder for Culture & Customers, I review these reports with acknowledgement to my advocacy for a positive complaint handling culture, ensuring transparency and equity are at the core of all customer interactions.

The Annual Report has demonstrated measurable progress and strategic enhancements in our approach to complaints management. The total number of formal complaints received decreased significantly to 489, marking an improvement from 645 in the previous year. While performance in meeting deadlines and managing extensions has fallen slightly below target, reporting has proven vital in highlighting this as an important area for continued focus. Addressing these challenges will be integral to achieving higher efficiency and customer satisfaction in the coming year.

Housing Repairs remained our busiest service area by way of complaint volumes with a total of 155 complaints allocated to this service area. The most common reasons for complaints received to Ipswich Borough Council included service delays, service standard, housing specific and decisions made. These reasons, root causes and trends continue to be scrutinised to ensure that the service we provide is as efficient as possible.

Key improvements implemented during 2024/25 underscore the Council's commitment to refining its complaints process. This included mandatory training for all complaint handlers and stakeholders, ensuring a consistent understanding of best practices across the organisation. Voluntary refresher sessions further emphasised the value of continuous learning, enabling personnel to address complaints with greater expertise and empathy. In addition, Council-wide quarterly reporting provided an in-depth, analytical view of complaints data, facilitating more informed decision-making and proactive resolution strategies.

These initiatives were complemented by the highest levels of staff engagement and corporate scrutiny observed in recent years. This enhanced focus has not only strengthened accountability within the Council but also elevated the importance of complaints management as a vital tool for improvement. Through these efforts, the Council aims to deliver a complaints process that is transparent, effective, and responsive, ultimately enriching the experience for residents and driving meaningful organisational change.

This was a insightful report that has provided an opportunity for Ipswich Borough Council to reflect on the current processes and highlight opportunities for improvement in its complaint handling, but also to recognise those areas of best practice already in operation. I approve the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Annual Report 2024/25 and Self-Assessment 2025/26.