

The Assurance Lead Officer introduced the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The report described the number and types of complaints received, who from, the service areas involved, and the number of complaints upheld. It was noted that this report referred to the statutory and the corporate complaints process and summarises trends, issues and complaint outcomes.

The Committee was informed that the total number of complaints received had reduced in 2023/2024, with 70 received in comparison to 81 in 2022/2023. Members considered the timeliness of complaint responses, with 50% of complaints were responded to within timescales. The types of issues raised were consistent and include staff conduct and quality of service delivered.

It was also highlighted that the Council also received compliments about the services provided.

There then ensued a period of questioning, and the Lead Assurance Officer stated that the Local Government Ombudsman produced an annual report on each contact received in relation to Walsall. In response to challenge around improvement, the Executive Director state that the data and issues raised were considered as part of performance and improvement – it was stressed that receiving and learning from complaints was important.

Assurance was sought that the timeliness of responding to complaints would improve. Officers explained that there was a relatively low number of complaints and described ways that were being considered to improve this. The Committee was reassured that as soon as the complaint was received it was actioned however the cases could be complex and require a lot of information to be processed. The issue of repeat and vexatious complainants was considered, and the drain on resources that this could have.

Members stressed the importance of updating complainants regularly to ensure people were aware that action was being taken, the ways in which this could be built into the system was described. It was agreed that Officers would consider this in the future.

Resolved:

That the Complaints Annual Report (Children and Young People 2023-2024) be noted.

88 Portfolio Holder priorities

The Portfolio Holder for Childrens Service provide detail and set out her three main priorities for the year. These were:

- Establish a Youth Council
This was enable equal partnership and to listen to young people to better respond to their priorities.
- Pathfinder Project

- To establish a robust family first pathway.
- Staff Feedback

To regularly consult staff and improve where necessary.

In response to questions the Committee were advised that the youth council would be a separate entity to the Corporate Parenting Board. Officers confirmed that the Council was working at pace in relation to the pathfinder and was on track with timescales.

Resolved that:

The Portfolio Holder update was noted.

89 **Update on Children's Alliance and Children and Young People 2040 Strategy**

The Director presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed) and informed the Committee that the report provided an overview of the 2040 children and Young People Strategy and progress against priorities.

The Committee was informed that the Walsall Children's and Young People's Strategic Alliance was a partnership group that was responsible for the delivery of the strategy. The Alliance was launched in 2023 and was made up of a range of Partners. Following a large public consultation, as detailed within the report, Walsall had set an ambitious vision for where it wanted to be by 2040. It was noted that children in deprived areas felt more negative, consultation also revealed that some children accepted that they would be treated differently to others.

Members were advised that the strategy was still in draft form, however work was underway to deliver on priorities. The initial evaluation of the summer holiday provision suggested that there had been less antisocial behaviour and outcomes were informing the coordinated youth offer. When progressing the town centre masterplan, young people had been involved and themes emerging were that they wanted it to feel safer.

There then ensued a period of questioning and discussion. It was noted that the information provided evidenced a very thorough consultation and congratulated Officers on their work. In response to questions, Officers confirmed that further work would be carried out with young people in relation to the town centre masterplan.

Resolved that:

- 1. The update on Children's Alliance and Children and Young People 2040 Strategy be noted.**
- 2. That Members are assured that the Alliance was making good progress in the development of a meaningful 2040 Children and Young People Strategy.**

3. That the Committee is provided with an update on progress at a future meeting.

90 **Areas of Focus – 2024 – 2025**

Members considered the areas of focus 2024-2025.

Resolved

That the areas of focus was noted.

91 **Forward Plans**

The Forward Plans were considered by the Committee.

Resolved

That the forward plans were noted.

92 **Recommendation Tracker**

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items. Members also considered the letter from the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner which responded to a letter written by the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, in relation to the resourcing of exploitation hubs in the region.

[Annexed]

Resolved:

1. That the recommendation tracker be noted.
2. That the letter from the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner be noted.

93 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be 5 November 2024.

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 7.05 pm.

Signed:

Date: