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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> 11
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>25 NOVEMBER 2004</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b> <b>DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>PAM CARROLL (595784) NIGEL GLOSSOP (595703)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>REF: PC/JHM</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: CE6</b>

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### 1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 This report provides a summary of the official complaints received by the Council for the last financial year and the first six months of the current financial year.

2.2 This report has in the past included information on two other key service areas; the DSO and Environmental Health. This information is in conflict with the corporate complaints report and it does not focus on actual complaints, but reports on requests for service and service failure. Therefore it is proposed that this information is omitted from the complaints report and presented in a service standards report to be implemented in quarter one 2005.

### 3.0 Detail

3.1 The table below compares the official complaints received for the last full financial year and the first six months of the current financial year.

	<b>12 Months to 31 March 2004</b>	<b>6 Months to 30 September 2004</b>
Number received	17	21
Resolved at Stage 1	14	16
Stage 1 still ongoing	0	0
Resolved at Stage 2	3	4
Stage 2 still ongoing	0	2
Complaints received via the Ombudsman	1	1

3.2 The 21 complaints received can be broken down as follows

Division	12 months to 31 March 2004	6 months to 30 Sept 2004
Planning Services	6	9 *
Housing	6	8
Technical Services	3	1
Revenue Services	0	1
Environmental Health	1	2
Economic Development	1	0
General	1	0

\* It should be pointed out that four of the complaints received by Planning related to the same issue.

3.3 Decisions made by the Ombudsman are detailed in the table below:

Financial year	Date	Department	Ombudsman's Decision
2003/04	23.12.03	Environmental Health Department	Insufficient evidence of maladministration
2004/05	16.04.04	Housing	Still awaiting decision
	30.06.04	Revenue Services	Outside Ombudman's jurisdiction by virtue of Section 26(6)(a) of the Local Government Act 1974
	19.07.04	Housing	Local Settlement

3.4 The first meeting of the corporate complaints review group has taken place and feedback from this group has indicated that the current system is basically sound. However the procedure needs to include a system whereby closed complaints are used to investigate any trends and identify areas for improvements and action plans to achieve this.

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None directly stemming from this report.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The current corporate complaints procedure is sound.
- 5.2 There has been a 247% increase in the number of complaints recorded, which indicates that we have been successful in raising the profile of the complaints procedure. Staff are encouraged to make it easier for the customer to complain and we now take telephone and e-mail complaints, instead of asking people to complete unnecessary amounts of paperwork. Forms are still available for people who prefer to provide in-depth information.
- 5.3 It is envisaged that the contact centre will deal with all telephone and e-mail complaints from January 2005, thereby streamlining the process even further.
- 5.4 The next corporate complaints report will include lessons learned and action plans for improvement.

## **9.0 Background Papers**

- 9.1 Complaints schedule

