

28 February 2023

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Dear Councillor,

A meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER & HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at these offices on **WEDNESDAY, 8TH MARCH, 2023 at 7.00 pm** when your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely,
KATHRYN HALL
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

Pages

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1. | To note Substitutes in Accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 - Substitutes at Meetings of Committees etc. | |
| 2. | To receive apologies for absence. | |
| 3. | To receive Declarations of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda. | |
| 4. | To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023. | 3 - 8 |
| 5. | To consider any items that the Chairman agrees to take as urgent business. | |
| 6. | Overview of Complaints - 2021/2022. | 9 - 18 |
| 7. | Performance Monitoring for the Third Quarter of 2022/23. | 19 - 38 |
| 8. | Equality and Diversity Progress Report 2022. | 39 - 58 |

9. Questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10.2 due notice of which has been given.

To: **Members of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader & Housing and Customer Service:** Councillors J Knight (Chair), M Pulfer (Vice-Chair), A Bennett, H Brunsdon, P Coote, A Eves, J Henwood, S Hicks, R Jackson, Andrew Lea, C Phillips, S Smith, L Stockwell, C Trumble and R Whittaker

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy
Leader & Housing and Customer Service
held on 11 January 2023
from 7.00 pm**

Present: J Knight (Chair)
M Pulfer (Vice-Chair)

K Adams	A Eves	Andrew Lea
A Bennett	J Henwood	C Phillips
R Clarke	S Hicks	C Trumble
J Dabell	R Jackson	R Whittaker

Absent: Councillors H Brunsdon, P Coote, S Smith and L Stockwell

Also Present: Councillors R de Mierre, R Salisbury and N Webster

Also Present as Cabinet Member: Councillors Ash-Edwards and Cromie

**1 TO NOTE SUBSTITUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE
RULE 4 - SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES ETC.**

Councillor Adams substituted for Councillor Stockwell, Councillor Clarke substituted for Councillor Smith and Councillor Dabell substituted for Councillor Brunsdon.

2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillors Brunsdon, Coote, Smith and Stockwell.

**3 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT
OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.**

None.

4 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**5 TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS
URGENT BUSINESS.**

None.

6 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2023/24.

The Chairman introduced the item and reminded Members of the Councils' priorities when considering the report. The Leader highlighted the challenges faced by the Council, including the rise of inflation and cost of living crisis. He noted that despite

these pressures the Council continued to deliver value for money services to support communities. He noted the proposal for the Treasury Management income be used to close the Budget deficit, recognising that the external pressures driving rising costs also drive our Treasury Management income. He highlighted the rise in Council Tax and confirmed that the draft Budget had been modelled on the lower increase of 2.75%.

Kathryn Hall, Chief Executive, introduced the report noting that since its publication the Local Government Financial Settlement (LGFS) had been announced. She noted the three main areas for debate; confirmation of the proposed 2.75% Council Tax rise as outlined at paragraph 13, the modest increase to Fees and Charges, and the proposed use of Treasury Management income. She also highlighted that this was the first Budget to be considered since pandemic restrictions had been fully lifted.

Section 1: Introduction and Financial Context

Members discussed in detail the key areas. In response to a Member query regarding the Efficiency Programme, the Chief Executive advised that the market had been unable to respond to the Council's procurement of public realm services and that work is underway to explore an alternative procurement approach given the current difficult market. Members discussed inflation and the Director of Resources and Organisational Development reminded Members the rates were cumulative for the medium term plan and that the key focus was on the budget for the coming financial year (2023/24).

A Member asked for clarity regarding inflation on utilities, the Chief Executive confirmed these were prudent estimated figures, which had been provided by the suppliers. She confirmed that subscriptions had been scrutinised thoroughly. Discussion was held on the cost of postage and ways to reduce costs. For example, a Member raised a point of having Councillor payslips sent electronically which Members agreed was a good idea. The Chief Executive agreed to consider this suggestion and confirmed there had been a huge shift to digitalise services and to provide them online, but reiterated the Council's services must be inclusive and accessible to all.

Members discussed Business Rates Revaluations, noting it was difficult to estimate the impact this would have on business rates due to regional variations. The Director of Resources and Organisational Development noted that these revaluations are not carried out locally but are instead carried out by the Valuations Office nationally. In addition, there is an Appeals process which makes the timing of any financial impact difficult to determine. A Member asked officers to consider issuing a report which considers ways to protect and increase reserve funds.

Section 2: Service Plans

Members discussed the Service Plans and Summary Budget tables, with the Director for each area providing a summary introduction.

Judy Holmes, Deputy Chief Executive noted on p.16 paragraph 1, should read 'to protect the Council'. She highlighted achievements over the past financial year, including the adoption of the Site Allocations District Plan Document (Sites DPD), a Sustainable Economic Strategy including set Net Zero targets, delivery of affordable housing and community grants and the installation of an Air Quality monitoring station in East Grinstead. The significant projects for 2023/24 included review of the district plan and review of public protection orders.

Simon Hughes, Director of People and Commercial Services, highlighted achievements which included the work of the Revenues and Benefits service on grants, the reduction of the number of residents in Temporary Accommodation and the introduction of the 1-2-3 food waste collection trial. In response to a Member query about housing, he said work on Housing Allocations is scheduled in the service plan for the coming year. A Member raised concern around the expansion of the 1-2-3 food waste collection trial. The Chief Executive noted this was challenging and complex work. The Council will continue to work with the disposal authority and partners to deliver the service.

Members discussed the increase of the bulky waste and garden waste collection. Officers advised both were very popular services. Increasing the level of access to both services would meet current demand and anticipated need over the next 5 years.

Members raised questions regarding the scheduling of improvements to parks across the villages in the district. Simon Hughes advised the Parks Improvement Programme assessed parks across the whole of the district including villages.

Members discussed the Leisure draft budget and the digital and technology roll out. Simon Hughes advised negotiations were ongoing with Places Leisure which were commercially sensitive. He advised the long-term strategy for digital services remained to migrate to cloud-based services where the market delivers value for money and agreements to mitigate vendor/data lock-in. He confirmed there was a contingency plan in place and insurance to mitigate financial risks associated with cyber security.

A Member asked for an update on facilitating the redevelopment of Burgess Hill Town Centre. The Chief Executive reassured Members that officers remained committed to this and there was a further Levelling Up bid in the process of being assessed.

Louise Duffield, Director Resources and Organisational Development, highlighted the work to deliver communications and marketing activity that supports the Councils priorities and effective operation of Council services, including the delivery of the Local Government Elections in May 2023.

Regarding HR and Organisational Development, a Member asked for a KPI on staff induction and training. The Chief Executive confirmed officers were committed to supporting and investing in training for staff as there was a high demand for skills in the public sector. In terms of the Community Engagement grants and how these are assessed and allocated, the Chief Executive advised that a range of grants are available, however, given the current climate, demand outweighs the core funding available.

Members discussed the provision of the Local Government Elections and the cost to the Council to implement the Voter ID scheme. The Director of Resources and Organisational Development advised that the Council had received a grant from Central Government to support implementation however, unlike the previous trial scheme which MSDC had participated in, this was a national change and thus would have significant support from the Electoral Commission which would, of course, be supported by the relevant teams and staff working locally.

A Member sought clarity on the Strategic Core Draft Budget, the Chief Executive confirmed this included staffing costs for Directors, Assistant Directors as well as other staffing costs.

Section 3: Capital Programme & Revenue Projects

The Director of Resources and Organisational Development, provided an update on the Capital Programme which outlined the Capital Strategy framework and the Council's 5-year rolling planned programme of works. She emphasised some of the projects were already underway and reiterated that the programme is dynamic in its approach.

Members discussed the Councils' Capital Programme and Revenue Projects in detail. A Member noted the Petanque Rink construction, Marle Place Recreation Ground, Burgess Hill on p.45 of the separate report under Contracts & Services, had been incorrectly listed. Officers confirmed this would be updated to Petanque Rink construction, Fairfield Recreation Ground, Burgess Hill. A Member asked for an update on Bedelands site which the Chief Executive advised, due to the sensitivity of the scheme, would be provided privately to the Ward Members.

Regarding Temporary Accommodation schemes, a Member asked for an update on Swan Mead East Grinstead. The Director of People & Commercial Services advised a feasibility study was underway and it was a priority of the Council to provide its own Temporary Accommodation, hence this work was being conducted.

Regarding the Parks Improvement Plan, a Member asked when the revenue figures would be available for St. John's Park, Burgess Hill Master Plan. The Director of People & Commercial Services advised the feasibility study for this scheme was underway and on completion, details of the budget would be provided. In response to a Member enquiry regarding Belmont Recreation Ground, Hassocks, not being included in the programme, the Director for People & Commercial Services confirmed information on this would be provided following the meeting.

A Member raised concerns about the condition of the Martlets Car Park, Burgess Hill. The Director of People & Commercial Services reminded Members officers will await the outcome of the Car Park condition survey to prioritise spend. This will ensure capital is prioritised according to need. In response to Member queries regarding the Martlets Temporary Urban Park, the Director confirmed the consultation and design process were complete, procurement would take up to 12 weeks. He confirmed the revenue allocated for the project would be ring fenced to this project and rolled over into the programme if not completed in this financial year.

A Member remarked on the cost of the Oaklands refurbishment in relation to the working patterns of officers and use of Oaklands. The Chief Executive noted hybrid working remains in place, which is both productive and competitive in the recruitment market and reminded Members a pilot is due to commence on different ways of utilising office space to support collaborative working.

A Member proposed an increase to Council Tax, to the highest possible increase of 2.99%, to protect the Councils assets. As there was no seconder to this proposal, the Chairman took Members to the vote on the recommendations as set out in the report, which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee considered the proposals for 2023/24 set out in the appended Corporate Plan and Budget 2023/24 report and agreed any comments or recommendations that it wishes to make to Cabinet on:

- (a) The financial outlook facing the Council over the medium term;
- (b) The proposed increase in Council Tax
- (c) The strategy to use Treasury Management income and then, if needed, General Reserve to balance the budget over the medium term;
- (d) Updates to the Capital Programme and strategy; and
- (e) The service commentaries and supporting summary budget tables for each service area.

7 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER AND HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23.

Louise Duffield, Director of Resources and Organisational Development, introduced the report which sets out the schedule of business for the remainder of 2022/23.

As there were no questions, the Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the indicative Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

8 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 8.25 pm

Chairman

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OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS – 2021/2022

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES
Contact Officer: Simon Jones, Assistant Director for Digital and People Services Email: simon.jones@midsussex.gov.uk
Karen Speirs, Customer Services Manager, Digital and People Services
Email: karen.speirs@midsussex.gov.uk
Wards Affected: (All)
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service
8th March 2023

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with annual information about formal complaints received by the council from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. It also summarises the complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) during the same period.

Recommendations

2. **The Committee is recommended to receive the report.**

Background

3. In 2021/22 the council received 161 complaints. 99% of these were investigated and responded to within the target times set out within the Council's complaints procedure. During the same period the council also received 320 compliments. This compares to 181 complaints and 575 compliments received in 2020/21.
4. Transparently reviewing and learning from our complaints and compliments data is a crucial step in ensuring we respond to feedback, identify opportunities for improvement, and celebrate our success. The staff newsletter provides the number of complaints and compliments received and highlights some examples of excellent customer service to share best practice. The total number of complaints and compliments received are also reported quarterly to Scrutiny Committee and reported through the monthly Member Information Service (MIS).
5. The compliments highlight our residents' appreciation of the services we provide and the efforts of our staff. In addition to those recorded below, verbal compliments are often received but not always recorded. The following is a breakdown of comments by service area:

Team	Compliments 21/22	Team	Compliments 2122
Customer Services	121	Environmental Health	5
Waste & Outdoor Svcs	85	Parking	3
Planning	61	Planning Support	3
Revenues & Benefits	17	Estates & Facilities	2
Wellbeing & Community Services	7	Communications	2
Housing	6	Digital	1
Democratic Services	6	Legal	1

6. Examples of the compliments we have received are shown below:

Communications – Praise from residents for the excellent and informative Mid Sussex Matters magazine.

Community Services – Thanks for organising of the play days across the district and other initiatives you assist with.

Corporate Estates – Thanks to both facilities and estates teams for all their work both in the offices and the district in making improvements and helping to make things run as smoothly as possible.

Customer Services – Thanks to the team from residents for the pro-active and caring help they provide across various services and for going the extra mile to assist those in a vulnerable situation. Thanks, received from residents to say that they are able to contact Mid Sussex District Council through multiple channels i.e. self-service, face to face and on the phone. Existing and new residents who have recently moved into Mid Sussex find this very refreshing.

Democratic Services and Elections - Thanks for the excellent minutes produced by the team and the way council meetings were conducted, particularly during Covid. Thanks for the way in which elections and canvass are run and for the assistance with events that are organised on behalf of Members including the Mid Sussex Applauds awards.

Digital – Thanks received for responding to queries raised by residents about customer facing technology so promptly.

Environmental Health – Thanks received for staff for dealing with sensitive neighbour enquiries, ranging from licensing, drainage, and noise. Grateful thanks received from residents who have received assistance through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme (DFG). Taxi drivers complimenting the service that they receive from the team and how we try to make it as accessible as possible, compared to their experience with some other authorities.

Housing – Thank you to staff for their help and support for both providing temporary accommodation and supporting vulnerable residents to stay in their homes. It has a huge impact on their lives. A quote which sums this up was: - *“For once in my life I am really happy, the accommodation was amazing, so peaceful and I’ve had the best night’s sleep in a long time.”*

Parking - Thank given to the **Civil Enforcement Officers** for taking action when made aware of parking problems and for the help that they give to vulnerable people during their visits throughout the district.

Planning – Compliments received about the way planning officers conduct themselves and manage the planning process and how efficient this feels compared to their experience with some other authorities. The positive impact of paths as part of the place and connectivity works.

Planning & Building Control Support Team – thanks for the service received - amazing service during the Covid pandemic – *“I have really struggled to contact other Local Authorities and their timescales have slipped massively but Mid Sussex have continued to provide an excellent service with no delays for which I am very grateful.”*

Revenues and Benefits – Vulnerable and concerned residents appreciate the help given both in reception and on the phone from staff on a range of matters.

Waste & Outdoor Services - Compliments to Serco for prompt response to fly-tipping, their cheerfulness and friendly disposition during collections and their assistance to our vulnerable residents. Thanks for their work during both extremes of inclement weather.

Thanks were given for assisting in arranging for parks and open spaces to be cleared before and after community events. Improvements to parks and open spaces, and the handling sensitive enquiries such as organising memorial benches on land that we are responsible for.

Wellbeing - Thanks received for the various initiatives and workshops, including the weight-off workshop, smoking cessation, alcohol, falls initiative and well-being checks – to quote feedback received - *“I doubt there’s anywhere in the country that offers the brilliant service that Mid Sussex offers!”*

Local Government Ombudsman Referrals

7. The LGO nationally reviewed 15,826 complaints from the public in 2021-22 which was an increase compared to 11,830 in 2020-21, however the LGO stopped accepting new complaints for three months due to Covid-19. Comparing 21/22 instead to pre-pandemic levels, 2019-20 shows 17,019 complaints received, and therefore reflects a reduction.
8. Of the 15,826 complaints received, 66% (two thirds) of their investigations were upheld, which decreased slightly from 67% in the previous year. The LGO’s latest data specifically relating to MSDC’s performance can be viewed via the following link: [Your Councils Statistics](#)
9. The LGO received 14 complaints in total for MSDC in 2021/2022 compared to 15 in 2020/2021. The breakdown of LGO Complaints and how they were handled for MSDC in 2021/22 are as follows;

Total received for Investigation	-	14
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Of these:

Closed without further action	-	7
Referred for local resolution	-	3

Of the remaining 4:

Not upheld	-	1
Upheld	-	3

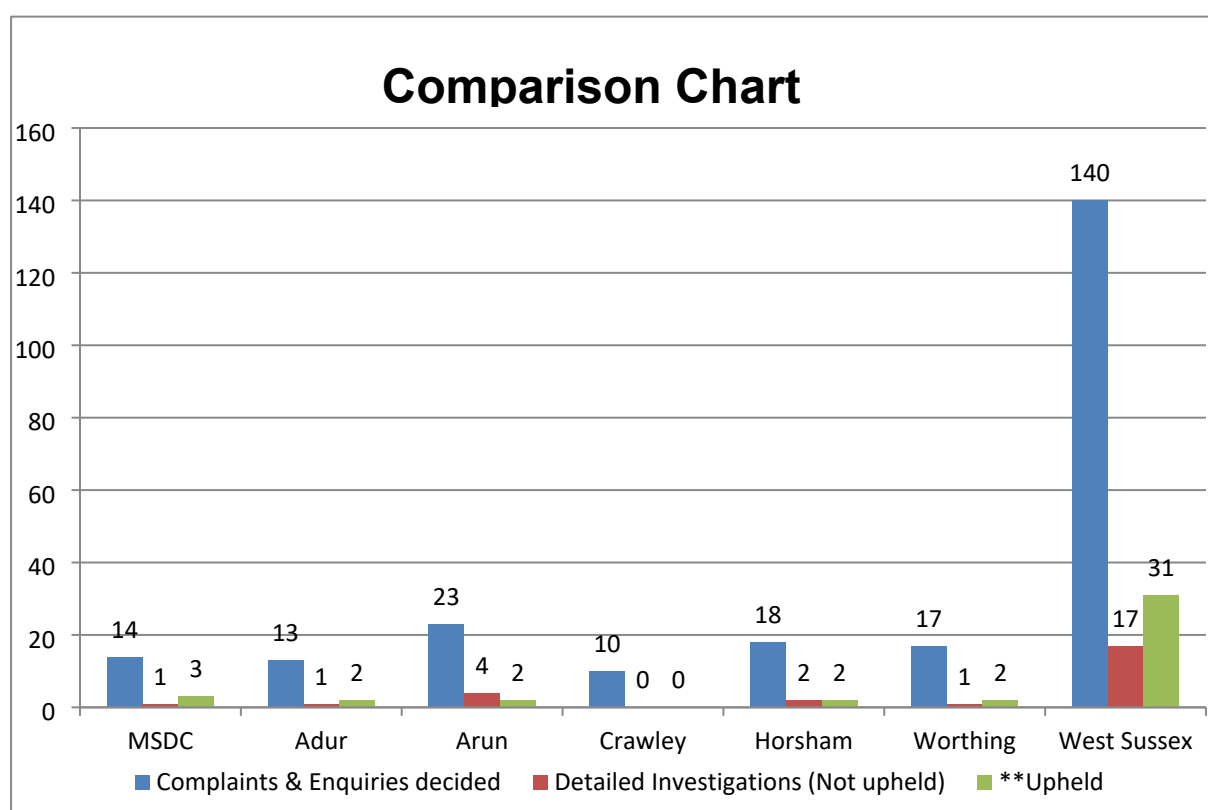
10. Therefore 75% of complaints that received detailed investigations were upheld compared to an average of 51% in similar authorities. Although it should be noted that while technically upheld, one complaint was not investigated as it did not meet the tests in the LGO assessment Code on how they decide which complaints to investigate, and the council had already provided a suitable resolution to the resident.
11. The council maintained its 100% compliance rate with any recommendations from the LGO and had already provided a satisfactory remedy in 33% of upheld cases, meaning that the council had already provided a satisfactory remedy to the resident before the complaint had reached the LGO or been investigated by them, compared to 20% in similar authorities.
12. The LGO states that they are reassured to see that compliance with their recommendations remains high which suggests that the system we have in place is in good health. They are also often impressed by authorities’ commitment to significant service changes and reviews following detailed complaint investigations.

13. The council follows the LGO good practice guidance in dealing with complaints:
- Ensuring reports are concise and written in plain English where possible to ensure they can be understood by a range of people.
 - Ensuring there is a record of how all key material planning considerations were considered.
 - Ensuring comments from local people and other bodies are summarised so people can see what was considered.
 - Clearly explaining what is being considered and the impact on any existing permissions and planning controls.
 - Using a system for recording reasons for decisions, even if the decision is that no action should be taken.

14. A local comparison for the number of complaints received by the LGO is as follows:

Adur	Arun	Crawley	Horsham	Mid Sussex	Worthing	West Sussex County Council
12	15	9	16	14	23	128

15. A local comparison of decisions made by the LGO for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 in West Sussex is shown in the table below:



** Upheld complaints are those where the LGO finds some fault in the way a council acted, even if it has agreed to put things right during the investigation or has accepted it needs to remedy the situation before the complainant made the complaint.

Complaints process and detail of LGO investigations

16. The Council has a formal complaints procedure (a link is available in the Background Papers section). A summary of all complaints and compliments received are reported to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services monthly and included in our Monthly Members Information Service. Heads of Service are advised of complaints which are being investigated by the LGO.
17. There can be discrepancies between the number of complaints received for investigation and the number completed by the LGO as sometimes they are completed in following fiscal year.
18. There were four detailed investigations undertaken by the LGO in 2021/22 into complaints by Mid Sussex residents. These four investigations were for Anti-Social Behaviour, Environmental Health (two), and Waste & Outdoor Services with three being upheld. Details of the upheld cases, their resolutions and improvement actions are shown below:

Service	Details of Complaint	LGO Summary	Service Improvement
1. Anti-Social Behaviour	A Community Protection Warning (CPW) was issued for filming of neighbours.	Complaint upheld. Although no fault was found for issuing the CPW, the LGO asked the Council to apologise for any confusion caused. An apology was given.	Processes reviewed and updated where required to avoid future issues.
2. Environmental Health	Complaint about the lack of interim support received following the breakdown of a stairlift under the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) adaptations.	Complaint upheld. Apology made for inconvenience and costs reimbursed.	Internal processes updated to include the LGO's recommendations.
3. Waste and Outdoor Services	Complaint about change in collection point of clinical waste for a vulnerable resident.	Complaint upheld. Although the complaint was upheld, the LGO did not investigate as the Council had already resolved the issue with the resident.	Although upheld, the LGO closed the complaint as the Council had already worked with the resident to reach a resolution. As per standard complaints handling, our processes were also reviewed internally to identify any opportunities for improvement.

19. Further details on the complaints closed before a detailed investigation took place are shown below:

Service	LGO Summary
Planning and development.	Closed after initial enquiries. (Complaint about granting planning permission for a detached single garage and workshop)

Planning and development.	Closed after initial enquiries. (Complaint about a planning application)
Planning and development	Closed after initial enquiries. (Complaint about lack of consideration given to trees when granting planning permission for a dwelling.)
Planning and development	Closed after initial enquiries. (Complaint about how allegations regarding works to protected trees had been dealt with. Had already appealed to the Planning Inspector).
Planning and development	Closed after initial enquiries. (Complaint about handling of neighbour's planning application)
Other	Closed after initial enquiries. (Alleged failure to consult properly on closure of a public building as consultation ongoing.)

Financial Implications

20. Reimbursements were required for one environmental health case as described above.

Risk Management Implications

21. There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

22. Complaints are an opportunity to learn and improve our services. Emphasis is placed on reviewing processes as much as the actual complaint, to ensure we don't miss any opportunities to improve, learn, and avoid similar outcomes in future.

Other Material Implications

23. There are no other material implications arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

24. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Appendices:

- [LGO Annual Review letters](#)

Background Papers

- [Review of Local Government Complaints 21-22](#)
- [MSDC Feedback page](#)
- [MSDC Complaints Procedure](#)

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

20 July 2022

By email

Ms Hall
Chief Executive
Mid Sussex District Council

Dear Ms Hall

Annual Review letter 2022

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2022. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

Complaint statistics

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 27 July 2022. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

I know your organisation, like ours, will have been through a period of adaptation as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic lifted. While some pre-pandemic practices returned, many new ways of working are here to stay. It is my continued view that complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic. Through the lens of this recent upheaval and adjustment, I urge you to consider how your organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility. Properly resourced complaint functions that are well-connected and valued by service areas, management teams and elected members are capable of providing valuable insight about an organisation's performance, detecting early warning signs of problems and offering opportunities to improve service delivery.

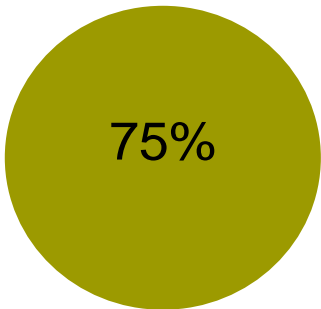
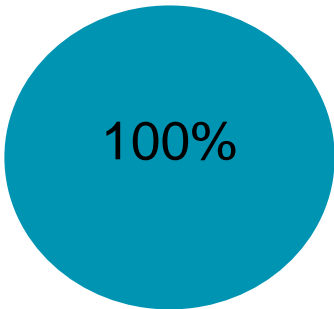
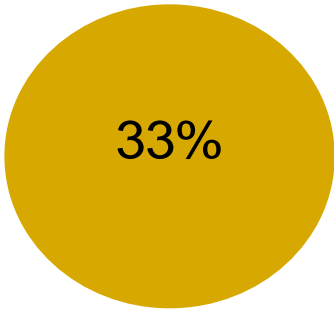
I want to support your organisation to harness the value of complaints and we continue to develop our programme of support. Significantly, we are working in partnership with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code. We are aiming to consolidate our approaches and therefore simplify guidance to enable organisations to provide an effective, quality response to each and every complaint. We will keep you informed as this work develops, and expect that, once launched, we will assess your compliance with the code during our investigations and report your performance via this letter.

An already established tool we have for supporting improvements in local complaint handling is our successful training programme. We adapted our courses during the Covid-19 pandemic to an online format and successfully delivered 122 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,600 people. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Yours sincerely,



Michael King
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaints upheld		
	<p>75% of complaints we investigated were upheld.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 51% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>3 upheld decisions</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 4 investigations for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</p>
Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations		
	<p>In 100% of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 100% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>Statistics are based on a total of 2 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning. 		
Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation		
	<p>In 33% of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 20% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>1 satisfactory remedy decision</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 3 upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</p>

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PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2022/23

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Contact Officer: Neal Barton, Policy and Performance Manager
Email: Neal.Barton@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477588
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service
8th March 2023

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Services with information about the Council's performance for the third quarter of 2022/23 from October to December 2022.

Summary

2. Performance monitoring data for the third quarter of 2022/23 shows the Council performing well in most service areas. In the small number of cases where service targets are not being fully met, the reasons for this are clearly understood and appropriate action is being taken.





Recommendations

3. **The Committee is recommended to:**
 - (i) **Note the Council's performance in the third quarter of the year and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.**
 - (ii) **Advise the Cabinet of any issues that the Committee considers should be given particular consideration. (Given the timings of the meetings, any comments made at this meeting will be reported verbally to Cabinet at its meeting on 13th March 2023).**
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Background

4. One of the functions of the Committee is to regularly monitor the performance of the Council's services, with a view to determining whether any additional scrutiny is required of specific services, particularly if performance is not of a satisfactory level. This report sets out performance in the third quarter of 2022/23 covering the period from 1st October to 31st December 2022.





5. Performance indicator information for the second quarter is provided at Appendix A. This is set out in tabular form using a traffic light system as explained below:

-  green – OK. On or exceeding target.
-  amber – Alert. Off target but under control with mitigation measures in place or is temporary and the target is still deliverable.
-  red – Warning. Off target and fundamental change or immediate action is required or that the target is no longer viable.
-  health check – data only with no target.

6. The Appendix sets out the bundle of performance indicators that the Scrutiny Committee monitors and reflects the minor changes agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 18th May 2022. These included new indicators for fly tipping, electric vehicle charging and numbers on the Housing Register.

Performance Indicators

7. Performance continues to be good across the Council. The third quarter position in comparison with the same period in the previous financial year is summarised below:

Quarter 3	 Green	 Amber	 Red	 Health check	Total
2022/23	28 (68%)	7 (17%)	6 (15%)	26	67
2021/22	31 (76%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	24	65

8. Members will note the positive performance in all key service areas. For instance, recent surveys show the Council is doing well in keeping our streets clean and free of litter. The 1-2-3 collection trial has continued for around 3,000 properties and is achieving a very positive recycling rate of 65% overall.
9. Particular areas of strong performance in the quarter include Housing Options where reductions have been achieved in the overall numbers in temporary accommodation and the use of nightly paid accommodation. For Customer Services, there has also been a reduction in the number of complaints.
10. Some service areas have experienced challenges in the last quarter, which are being addressed:
- Waste service performance was temporarily affected by the snow prior to Christmas, which saw nearly two weeks of disruption to waste and recycling collections.
 - The Revenues and Benefits speed in processing claims continues to be challenged by the additional responsibilities associated with the payment of Energy Rebates and the administration of grant schemes. Accuracy in assessment remains very high.

Conclusions

11. The Council's services continued to perform well in the third quarter of 2022/23. Where performance is below target, corrective action aimed at improvement has been planned and is being delivered.

Risk Management Implications

12. There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities Implications

13. There are no direct equality implications contained within this report. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken within individual services as required.

Sustainability Implications

14. The suite of performance indicators monitored by the Scrutiny Committee contains sustainability-based indicators.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Quarter 3 Performance Indicators





Background papers

None.

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Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Services - Quarter 3 Performance Report 2022-23







PI Status	
	OK - On or exceeding target
	Alert. Off target but under control with mitigation measures in place or is temporary and the target is still deliverable
	Warning. Off target and fundamental change or immediate action is required or the target is no longer viable
	Data Only

Community Portfolio - Cllr Norman Webster



Building Control


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
The percentage of plans received by Building Control which are checked within 15 working days	87%	89%	99%	87%		Q3 22/23 - 205 plans checked Q3 21/22 - 237 plans checked
Building Control Site inspections carried out within 24 hours of date requested.	98%	98%	98%	98%		Q3 22/23 - 1,714 inspections Q3 21/22 - 1,508 inspections

Community Services


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Anti-social behaviour cases resolved within 3 months as a percentage of those referred	Data only	56.9%	61%	Data only		27 out of 44 ASB cases in Q3 22/23 35 out of 52 ASB cases in Q3 21/22
Overall Crime Rate per 1000	Data only	11.04	12.14	Data only		
Number of health and wellbeing interventions delivered	1850	490	445	430		
Proportion of health and wellbeing interventions resulting in health improvement	85%	92.3%	92.6%	85%		This indicator involves calling back three months after the intervention to monitor whether it has led to a sustained improvement.

Environmental Health



	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Proportion of Environmental Health service requests which are actioned and resolved within 3 months of receipt	94%	96%	98%	94%		Q3 22/23 – 855 service requests Q3 21/22 – 998 service requests
Percentage of Environmental Health service requests that are responded to within five working days	95%	96%	100%	95%		Q3 22/23 – 1,015 service requests Q3 21/22 – 994 service requests Requests for services can be across the range of Environmental health activities including licensing, housing standards, environmental protection and food hygiene.

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Disabled Facilities Grants completed (cumulative)	Data only	47	69	Data only		

Land Charges


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
The percentage of Local Authority Searches replied to within 7 working days	96%	100%	100%	96%		

Legal and Member Services


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
The percentage of agendas which are published on the website 5 days before a meeting	100%	100%	100%	100%		
Number of legal cases which are live as at the end of each month	Data only	444	414	Data only		

Deputy Leader Portfolio – Cllr John Belsey



Finance

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days of receipt	95.0%	100.0%	99.9%	95.0%		Q3 22/23 - 1,090 invoices Q3 21/22 - 1,201 invoices


Landscapes

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
% Satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service	85%	66%	59%	85%		Satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service was lower than target. As Members will recall from previous updates, the online surveys provide more focussed information and survey respondents report dissatisfaction specifically in relation to the emptying of litter bins and grass cutting. This part of the service was made more difficult during the snow in December and significant wet weather during the early part of the Quarter.

Property and Asset Maintenance

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Footfall in the Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath	Data only	+7.4%	+2.98%	Data only		Footfall for Q3 22/23 was 1,443,405, which is 2.98% up on the same quarter of last year of 1,401,634.
The percentage of rent due collected	97%	98%	98%	97%		


Waste and Outdoor Services

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
% satisfied with refuse collection, recycling collection and street cleansing	89%	N/A	N/A	89%	N/A	<p>The Council and its partner, Serco, will (following low uptake of phone and time-limited online surveys) be moving to a perpetual online survey. This will enable the Council and Serco to better respond to issues raised in a timely manner.</p> <p>A customer satisfaction survey of participants in the 1-2-3 collection service trial is being undertaken in February and will be reported in the next performance report.</p>
The percentage of fly tips removed within one working day of notification	82%	88%	95%	82%		


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Amount of waste per household which is disposed of in landfill sites (kilos)	424	103	101	106	✅	
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	46%	44%	42%	44%	⚠️	<p>The 1-2-3 Collection Service is performing well, with an overall recycling rate of 65%. However, this trial is taking place at 3,000 properties (when we service over 66,000 in total) so the overall impact is low when looking at figures for the whole district.</p> <p>Figures for the Quarter are lower than expected following the snow (which typically leads to increased use of the black wheelie bin) and wet weather increased the amount of cardboard rejected at the kerbside.</p>
Number of subscriptions to green waste composting	Data only	22,501	22,453	Data only	📊	
Number of missed collections per 100,000	50	135	137	50	🛑	The snow, which saw nearly two weeks of disruption to waste and recycling collections just prior to Christmas, has temporarily impacted this figure.
% of relevant land assessed as having below acceptable levels of litter	6%	2%	2%	6%	✅	The Council has recently received independent gradings for both litter and detritus (leaf fall) and we are pleased to see the scores well above our target.
% of relevant land assessed as having below acceptable levels of detritus	8%	8%	4%	8%	✅	

Economic Growth and Net Zero Portfolio – Cllr Stephen Hillier



Economic Development




	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Business grants – funds awarded compared to total grant received	Data only	38%	100%	Data only		Cabinet Grants Panel on 24th October and 12 December awarded another 27 grants of £46,319 to use up all of the Microbusiness grants funding of £71,428. 43 small businesses looking to expand or take on an apprentice have been assisted through the micro-business grant scheme overall in 2022/23.

Sustainability








	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Greenhouse gas emissions from Council buildings (kg)	Data only	32,701	74,067	Data only		The Q3 2021/22 emissions figure for comparison was 75,069 kgs. Targets for 2023/24 and actions for their achievement will be included in the Net Zero programme.

Housing and Customer Services Portfolio – Cllr Rachel Cromie
Customer Services and Communications





	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Number of Complaints received	Data only	34	22	Data only		Complaints breakdown by service area and summary of main reasons for complaints: Waste & Outdoor Services – 8 (garden waste service, missed assisted collections) Revenues – 7 (incorrect calculation of Council Tax liability and complaints about enforcement action) Housing Options – 2 (way that homelessness applications were dealt with)
Percentage of enquiries resolved at point of Contact	85%	N/A	N/A	85%	N/A	Q3 figure is currently unavailable. As well as switchboard, the Centre receives direct line calls for 11 Council services. Number of calls made to the Contact Centre: Q3 22/23 – 15,036 calls (excludes some direct line service calls currently unable to be collated) Q3 21/22 – 13,246 calls. In addition to phone calls, Centre staff also dealt with 6,695 personal callers to reception in Q3 22/23 against 2,635 in Q3 21/22.
Number of Compliments received	Data only	84	72	Data only		Breakdown of main services in receipt of compliments: Waste & Outdoor Services – 26 Customer Services – 21

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
						Development Management – 9 Revenues – 4 Landscapes – 2 Environmental Health – 2 Democratic Services – 2 Housing Options – 2 Planning & Building Control Support – 2
Number of e-forms submitted directly by the public	Data only	7254	7203	Data only		
Monthly customer satisfaction scores	90%	95%	96%	90%		Customer satisfaction is being measured by phoning back a sample of customers who had previously contacted the Customer Service Centre to gain their feedback on how the call was dealt with.
Percentage of complaints responded to within published deadlines	100%	100%	100%	100%		The deadline for responding to complaints is to acknowledge within 5 days and respond within 10 working days.




Housing

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Number of households assisted to access the private rented sector	Data only	0	4	Data only		
Number of households accepted as homeless	Data only	20	11	Data only		
The number of households approaching the Council with a housing enquiry (excludes telephone calls)	Data only	234	189	Data only		
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Data only	82	62	Data only		
Number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation	Data only	33	16	Data only		
The average amount of time a household has spent in temporary accommodation overall when they leave following the acceptance of a full homelessness duty (days)	Data only	205	338	Data only		
Number of applicants on the Housing Register	Data only	1,988	1,932	Data only		Choice-Based Lettings priority bands and numbers in each at Q3 are: Band A – Emergency or high priority (58) Band B – High priority (37) Band C – Medium priority (515) Band D – Non-priority housing need (1,322)









Human Resources

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Staff sickness absence rate (Cumulative days per fte)	7.00	4.83	7.10	5.25		This is above target due to individual matters being addressed by officers under Council policies.
Staff turnover	12%	7.62%	9.97%	9%		
Ethnic Minority representation in the workforce - employees	Data only	3.4%	4.4%	Data only		
Percentage of Employees with a Disability	Data only	6.4%	7.8%	Data only		

ICT and Digital


	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
The percentage of ICT help desk service requests completed within the target time agreed with the customer	97%	96%	97%	97%		Q3 22/23 – 1,004 service requests Q3 21/22 – 1,071 service requests
Percentage of ICT helpdesk calls outstanding	15%	15%	16%	15%		
Freedom of Information Requests responded to within 20 working days	100%	99.46%	99%	100%		Q3 22/23 - 264 FOI requests Q3 21/22 - 190 FOI requests

Revenues and Benefits



	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Speed of processing - new Housing Benefit claims	21	20.4	26.1	21		Q3 22/23 - 81 claims Q3 21/22 - 103 claims
Speed of processing - new Council Tax Support claims	20.0	18.5	22.2	20.0		Q3 22/23 - 348 claims Q3 21/22 - 339 claims
Speed of processing - changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit claims	8.0	10.5	12.0	8.0		Q3 22/23 - 1,077 HB & 3,074 CTS adjustments Q3 21/22 - 1,324 HB & 4,995 CTS adjustments Performance in processing Benefit claims and adjustments is still being affected by backlogs from the administration of grants and the Energy Rebate scheme. Also, from the need to train new staff. The speed of processing Housing Benefit changes in circumstances is expected to improve in the final quarter as there are a large number of annual rent increases in March 2023, which are normally processed in a day.
Speed of processing - changes of circumstances for Council Tax Support claims	9.0	16.1	20.0	9.0		
Percentage of Council Tax collected	98.5%	56.3%	83.8%	85.0%		Q3 22/23 - £110,440,135 collected Q3 21/22 - £105,532,207 collected
Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected	79.2%	64.9%	84.5%	79.2%		Q3 22/23 - 41,378,625 collected Q3 21/22 - £32,250,445 collected
LA Overpayment Error	£105,000	£19,024	£23,987	£78,750		
Accuracy in Assessment	93.0%	91.8%	96.0%	93.0%		




Leisure and Parking Portfolio - Cllr Ruth de Mierre

Leisure Operations

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
The number of visits made to the Leisure Centres	Data only	362,645	353,625	Data only		Attendances at the Leisure Centres continue to recover following the pandemic, with numbers higher than for the same quarter in 2021/22 (292,470). A Leisure Contract Update report was considered by Scrutiny Committee for Communities, Leisure and Parking on 16 th November 2022.

Parking Services and Electric Vehicle Charging

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Cancellation rate of Penalty Charge Notices	7%	6%	6%	7%		Q3 22/23 387 cancelled out of 6,825 PCNs issued. Q3 21/22 710 cancelled out of 10,611 PCNs issued.
The percentage of pay and display transactions made by cashless payments	58%	63%	65%	58%		



	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Usage of Council-owned electric vehicle charging points in public car parks (in kWh)	Data only	17,704	47,891	Data only		
Number of enabled electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks	Data only	52	60	Data only		A further 8 charging points were installed in December at the Queens Way Car Park, East Grinstead, bringing the total to 60 in 10 car parks across the District. The priority site installation at Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill has been delayed due to lease issues.
Percentage uptime for electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks	95%	99.94%	86%	95%		Flooding issues for Vicarage Road, East Grinstead (Oct to end of Dec) and Orion, Hassocks car parks (Dec) meant that these charging points were not operational for some of the quarter.

Planning Portfolio – Cllr Robert Salisbury

Development Management

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Validation of planning applications within 7 working days	96%	98%	99%	96%	✓	Ytd Q3 22/23 – 1,812 total applications processed Ytd Q3 21/22 – 1,933 total applications processed
Costs awarded against the Council where the decision of the Council is overturned at Planning appeal	Data only	£00	£00	Data only	📊	
Processing of planning applications: Major applications within 13 weeks (or agreed extension if time)	90%	100%	94%	90%	✓	Ytd Q3 22/23 – 43 major applications Ytd Q3 21/22 – 43 major applications
Processing of planning applications: Minor applications within 8 weeks	90%	100%	96%	90%	✓	Ytd Q3 22/23 – 232 minor applications Ytd Q3 21/22 – 219 minor applications
Processing of planning applications: Other applications within 8 weeks	95%	99%	95%	95%	✓	Ytd Q3 22/23 – 882 other applications Ytd Q3 21/22 – 1,048 other applications
Planning appeals allowed	33%	20%	26%	33%	✓	
Planning Enforcement site visits made within 10 days of complaint	80%	91%	89%	80%	✓	

Housing Enabling

	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23			Latest Note
	Target	Value	Value	Target	Status	
Cumulative number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Data only	183	288	Data only		
The % of policy compliant section 106's signed in the year on sites that meet the affordable housing threshold	Data only	100%	86%	Data only		6 out of 7 schemes have been policy compliant in the year to date.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PROGRESS REPORT 2022

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Contact Officer: Neal Barton, Policy and Performance Manager
Email: Neal.Barton@midsussex.gov.uk
Tel: 01444 477588
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Services
Date of meeting 8th March 2023

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with an update on progress in 2022 against the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020 – 2024.

Recommendations

2. **The Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the Equality and Diversity Progress Report 2022 included at Appendix 1.**
-

Background

3. The Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020 – 2024 was approved by Council on 22 July 2020 and it was agreed that annual reports on progress should be provided to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
4. The Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme has been shaped by the Equality Act 2010, which introduced a number of responsibilities for councils, including a public sector equality duty and a requirement to promote equality of opportunity between those with "protected characteristics" and others. The public sector equality duty means that the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to:
 - Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The nine protected characteristics are:

- disability
- age
- race
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

The Act also introduced specific duties for public bodies to publish Equality Objectives and equality data to show their compliance with the duty.

5. The Council continues to mainstream its equalities work with its customer service activities, recognising that meeting the needs of individual customers for Council services is consistent with good equalities practice. In addition to considering the needs of those with protected characteristics, our equalities work looks at disadvantage arising from income or skill level and by virtue of where people live.
6. The Equality and Diversity Scheme also covers the Council's work in relation to the Armed Forces Community Covenant to support those who have served in the Armed Forces and their families. The Covenant and achievement of the Bronze Employer Recognition Scheme award shapes the Council's work to support the armed forces community.
7. Much of the Council's work to support the protected groups in Mid Sussex involves working with community groups and voluntary organisations. The provision of grants to support the voluntary sector are especially important, given that many CVS organisations have faced a reduction in their financial resources due to the pandemic, while demand for the services they provide has risen.

Progress Report 2022

8. The Annual Report for 2022 is included at Appendix 1. The report includes a summary highlighting the main areas of progress in 2022 and initiatives for the year ahead.
9. The Office for National Statistics has been releasing information from the 2021 Census, which provides updated data on the protected groups in Mid Sussex. These are referred to in the attached annual report, with the headline Census information summarised in the appendix to the report.
10. In addition to service developments for those with protected characteristics, the progress report comprises information about the composition of the Council's staff with regard to age, ethnicity, disability, and gender. This includes the Council's gender pay gap and related information, which is required to be published under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
11. Overall, the Annual Report concludes that overall good progress has been made in meeting our duties and highlights further initiatives to be developed in the year ahead.

Arrangements for updating the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme

12. The Council's current Equality and Diversity Scheme runs to 2024 and the Equality Act requires the Council to review its Equality Objectives every four years. A new scheme with reviewed objectives will be produced for approval by Council early in 2024, informed by the new Census data.

Policy Context

13. The Annual Report demonstrates progress against the Council's Equality Objectives. The delivery of these objectives will make a major contribution to the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

Other Options Considered

14. The report updates on the progress of the Equality and Diversity Scheme, which is designed to set out a programme to meet the Council's statutory requirements under the Equality Act. No other practicable options were identified.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

16. The Progress Report helps the Council to continue to demonstrate that it is meeting the public sector equalities duty under the Equality Act and to avoid the risks associated with non-compliance.

Equalities and Customer Services Implications

17. Customer service and ensuring equality of access are of continuing importance, especially with regard to meeting the needs of those who are vulnerable or may find it difficult to access our services. The report sets out steps to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and refers to the Council's programme of impact assessments, which are designed to promote equality and to identify and address the barriers that may prevent people from accessing its services.

Sustainability Implications

18. The Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme supports its community leadership role in the delivery of local and UK sustainable development goals set out in the Sustainable Economy Strategy. Specifically, this contributes towards: Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 2: Zero Hunger and Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being.

Other Material Implications

19. None.

Appendices

20. Equality and Diversity Progress Report 2022

Background Papers

21. None.

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MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Progress Report 2022

March 2023

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress made in 2022 to deliver the priorities set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020 – 2024. It includes many examples of how the Council, working with its partners, is providing for the needs of the protected groups in the District.

Main areas of progress in 2022

- Continuing to use our Community Grants Schemes to provide for organisations that support vulnerable people.
- Providing the Platinum Jubilee Grants Scheme to 37 neighbourhood, charity and local organisations to support and facilitate community parties and events within the District.
- Working with Citizens Advice to expand the use of the Community Champions Network to engage with local minority communities. This has included the provision of a language café and welcome scheme for Ukrainian refugees.
- Providing a programme of Play Days on tour during school holidays at 10 locations across the District and 3 Skate Fests with free activities for local families.
- Investment in our property assets and working to provide facilities with improved accessibility such as the provision of a changing places public toilets at the Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath.
- Committing to using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to invest of £245,000 over three years in the community hubs being developed in areas of relative deprivation within the District's three towns at Bentswood, Haywards Heath; Stonequarry at East Grinstead; and the Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill.
- Provision of new community buildings such as at Kingsview Burgess Hill, Age UK facility.

Census 2021 information about the Mid Sussex population

Information from the 2021 Census has been released and a summary of the key data for Mid Sussex can be found in the appendix to this report. The Census is a once in a decade event and it will provide us with key data to help plan our services with partners.

Equality and Diversity initiatives in the year ahead

The report highlights initiatives to be delivered in the year ahead to further develop the Council's equality and diversity work. These include:

- Developing a new Equality and Diversity Scheme, informed by the 2021 Census data.
- Further work to address the cost of living issues, especially assistance to those most affected by the increase in energy costs.
- Play Days – delivering indoor Play Days, Play Days on Tour, Skate Fests and Activity Events "Spring into Action"
- Further support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) through the services commissioned from Runway Training and West Sussex County Council's Think Futures.
- Armed Forces awareness training to be provided for staff and Members.
- Additional improvements to the accessibility of Council buildings, including the provision of further Changing Places public conveniences.

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the Council's annual Equality and Diversity progress report, setting out the achievements made in supporting equality and diversity in Mid Sussex in 2022. The report highlights key pieces of work we have undertaken and sets out the future direction in our provision of fair and inclusive services.
2. Progress is reported against the context of the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020-24, which contains the following Equality Objectives:

Objective 1 - We will show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and diversity.

Objective 2 - We will consider the needs of individuals across the whole community, and especially those groups protected by the Equality Act 2010 when we plan and deliver our services.

Objective 3 - We will seek to prevent discrimination and promote good relations between different sectors of the community.

Objective 4 - As an employer, we will seek to promote equality and respect for diversity in the workplace by providing appropriate policies, training and support, including assistance for former members of the armed forces.

3. The Scheme identifies actions to support the delivery of these objectives. It also sets out measures to ensure that the Council meets its public sector equality duty and ensures that discrimination does not occur on the grounds of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. These protected characteristics are disability; age; race; sexual orientation; religion or belief; sex; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership.
4. In addition to considering the needs of those with protected characteristics, our Equality and Diversity Scheme and this progress report considers disadvantage arising from income or skill level, by virtue of where people live and the Council's work to support the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

PROGRESS IN DELIVERING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN 2022

5. This section identifies service improvements for the protected groups, together with those who may find it difficult to access services by virtue of where they live and those with poor skills or low incomes. Some of our initiatives cover a range of equalities issues. These include the operation of our grants schemes; the Health and Wellbeing service; provision of activities through our leisure centres; and our systems for reporting and dealing with hate crime and anti-social behaviour.

Support to community organisations through our Community Development and Facility Grants Scheme

6. The Council has supported the community and voluntary sector through the pandemic, with the protected groups especially impacted. The Council's Community and Development Grants Schemes continue to support a wide range of community organisations and projects that seek to assist vulnerable groups.

7. The grants scheme includes partnership agreements with a core of voluntary organisations that support vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds. These agreements are in place with Citizens Advice; Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove; Age UK East Grinstead; Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA); and Action in Rural Sussex. The partnership agreements are awarded over a six-year period to provide continuity and financial security to these organisations.
8. Information about the contributions of the partnership agreement organisations to disadvantaged groups in Mid Sussex is provided below:
 - a. **Citizens Advice** deals with a variety of clients, with its biggest recent developments in its areas of advice for Mid Sussex clients being around Universal Credit claims, energy and debt advice. They provide advice sessions at the job centre in Haywards Heath and the community hub in the Bentswood area of Haywards Heath. The Council is working with Citizens Advice on the Mid Sussex Community Champions project, which is a network of volunteer community champions from EU, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. New projects this year through this initiative have included the provision of a language café and welcome scheme for Ukrainian refugees.
 - b. **Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove** has around 800 older people in Mid Sussex who are members of their three centres in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. The Council has assisted Age UK West Sussex, Brighton and Hove with the provision of new accommodation at the Kings Weald community building in Burgess Hill. Age UK has a new Community Development team in Mid Sussex, which aims to provide activities for older people in local community venues that are accessible and respond to the needs of older people to help combat social isolation.
 - c. **Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA)** supports local charities, volunteers, community groups, non-profit organisations and social enterprises. The Council has provided support to Mid Sussex Voluntary Action to move to the Cherry Tree at Burgess Hill and work to make this into a Community Hub. Their recent initiatives have included the setting up of the Mid Sussex Food Partnership and working on Digital Inclusion. The Cherry Tree is acting as a welcome hub for Ukrainian refugees in the District.
 - d. **Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS)** provides valuable support to village halls, which are often the heartbeat of rural communities. This has included provision of legal, organisational and development advice for the trustees and management committees running these facilities on behalf of local people.
9. Outside of the partnership agreements, the Council funded 20 organisations with a total grant value of £92,949 through Community Development Grants and to celebrate the Queen's jubilee, the Council made available the Jubilee Grants Scheme Fund of £25,000. This scheme gave grants to 37 neighbourhood, charity and local organisations to support and facilitate community parties and events within the District.
10. In addition to the Community Development Grants schemes, in 2022 there were six Facility Grants to voluntary sector organisations, funded through the release of s106 contributions, totalling £148,164. The awards supported sports clubs, youth groups, community centres and associations to make capital improvement to their facilities.

The Health and Wellbeing service

11. The Council's Health and Wellbeing Hub continues to be developed with a high emphasis on targeting people in the community who are at risk of the poorest health, with their services of particular benefit to vulnerable groups. Ways of promoting healthy lifestyles were disrupted during the lockdown, with the Council's Wellbeing Team having to move to more virtual contact due to social distancing requirements. There has been a gradual movement back to more face-to-face interventions.
12. Examples of some of their work in 2022 include the falls prevention programme, which is especially useful for older people to improve their strength and mobility. Also, Workplace Health recognised by Public Health as a key vehicle through which to engage with younger, working age adults who are best placed to avoid developing long term conditions by adjusting lifestyle and behaviours. In addition, the service provides wellbeing coaches aimed at supporting people with low self-esteem, anxiety, or caring responsibilities to access Health and Wellbeing Services.
13. The Mid Sussex Health and Wellbeing Network is convened by the Hub and is made up of approximately 80 organisations, both statutory and third sector, working within the broad field of wellbeing. This is a key source of exchanging information and getting referrals to and from the service. Subjects covered this year have included addictive behaviours and Mental Health support.

Leisure Centres

14. The Council's Leisure Centres aim to provide a balanced range of activities to suit all sectors of the community and includes a scheme for concessional use. Groups who benefit from concessionary charges include the over 60's; juniors of 16/17 years of age; and students in full-time education. The Leisure Centres also work through the GP Exercise Referral Programme and provide activities for local schools and community groups.

Hate Crime Reporting

15. Reported hate crime figures for the last two years are shown below:

Table A: Reported Hate Crime

	Mid Sussex		West Sussex	
Type of Hate Crime	2021	2022	2021	2022
Transgender	6	9	46	67
Religion	2	5	47	67
Disability	20	19	127	146
Sexuality	35	30	231	266
Race	88	149	888	970
Total	145	206	1,342	1,520

16. A hate incident/hate crime is any incident where the victim or another person believes that they, the victim has been targeted because of their perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. Hate crimes tend to be under reported and increases can be seen as the success of initiatives to raise awareness of hate crimes and how it can be reported.

17. The Council works through the Community Safety Partnership to monitor and report any Community Tensions within the District leading to hate crimes. This data will be discussed further at the partnership and action agreed, particularly in areas where Mid Sussex has an identified issue. The table above suggests that race-based hate crime is an increasing problem in the District. Further work will be undertaken with partners including the police to address this.

FOCUSED WORK AROUND PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN 2022

18. The next section of the report identifies service improvements for the protected groups last year. Data from the 2021 Census has been released and updated information for Mid Sussex is also included in this section. A summary of the headline data from the Census is included at Appendix A.

Disability

19. The 2021 census showed that 5% of Mid Sussex residents are disabled under the Equality Act with their day-to-day activities limited a lot and 9.2% limited a little. Health Study information and projections to 2030, suggest a particular increase in the number of people aged 65+ with a disability in Mid Sussex. A further consequence of our ageing population is the projected increase in the numbers living with dementia in Mid Sussex, from the current 2,270 to 3,500 by 2030.

Specific actions in 2022 included:

- a. The Council's Housing Standards Team provided 91 Disabled Facilities Grants during 2021/22. These delivered a range of home adaptations to help disabled people to live more independently in their own homes, including ramps, stairlifts, adapting kitchens for wheelchair use and replacing baths with level access showers. A further 69 have been awarded in the period April to December 2022.
- b. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £1,000 was awarded to Kangaroos Mid Sussex to fund a Jubilee Picnic in the Park for families with disabled children at the Worlds End Park in Burgess Hill.
- c. £1,716 from the Community Grants Fund was awarded to 4Sight Vision Support to fund the production of newsletters in an accessible format.
- d. One wheelchair-accessible new affordable unit was provided in 2021/22.
- e. The Unmet Demand Survey is conducted every three years to assess and review the number of Hackney Carriage vehicles that the Council licences. This year's survey had an emphasis on contacting disabled people and their carers to gain views on the provision of wheelchair-accessible licensed vehicles in the District and the services offered by taxi drivers. The survey found we had sufficient taxis available for our population.
- f. Mandatory Safeguarding Awareness and Disability Awareness Training for licensed drivers has been introduced.
- g. A changing places toilet has been provided at the Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath. A Changing Places toilet is designed to meet the needs of

disabled children and adults with complex care needs who require carer support, appropriate equipment and more space.

Age- older people

20. Age is a fundamental factor affecting people's life experiences. Mid Sussex has an older age structure, illustrated by the release of data from the 2021 Census. This showed that 20.6% (31,500) of the District's population is over 65, an increase since the 2011 Census of 24.5%. The national average % of over 65s is 18.4%. There has also been a 51% increase in Mid Sussex of those aged 70 – 74 and a 35% increase in those aged 75 -79.
21. An increasing number of older people have one or more long-term health conditions and the latest Census figures show that 11,582 Mid Sussex residents are providing unpaid care. The Census also showed that there are 8,599 single person 65+ households in Mid Sussex. Due to the predominantly rural nature of the District, there is an increasing danger that many older people will face social isolation and feel cut off from the wider community.

22. Specific action in 2022 included:

- a. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £695 was awarded to Mid Sussex Older People's Association to fund an afternoon tea at the King Edward Hall in Lindfield with a violinist and refreshments.
- b. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £350 was awarded to Age UK West Sussex Brighton & Hove to fund celebrations at Lamb House, Haywards Heath, including afternoon tea with a harpist and Jubilee community party.
- c. The Mid Sussex Partnership provided a grant to Mid Sussex Older Peoples Council to provide MiDAS minibus driver training to 10 new volunteer drivers.
- d. The Council has published a new and updated edition of the Community Connections Directory to help older residents get access to vital support services. The Directory contains extensive contact information for the many local organisations that offer help to older people in the community. It provides details of organisations that can help older people with a range of issues like managing money, maintaining independence, finding local social activities, or getting support with housing issues.

Age – younger people

23. The number of people identified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the District is one indicator of the economic wellbeing of young people. The Council facilitates a NEETs Forum, which is made up of representatives from the Better Young Lives Partners group forum and works to support young people who are NEET.
24. There was a total of 29 NEETs in Mid Sussex at December 2022 split as follows:
- NEETs seeking Employment, Education and Training: 22
 - NEETs not available (those young people who for personal circumstances are not able to look for work – e.g., through pregnancy, illness etc.) 7
 - Unknowns 336 – these are young people whom WSCC officers have been unable to contact who might be NEET or EET but no details are available.

This compares to the figures for June 2022 of a total of 41 NEETs with 26 seeking Employment, Education and Training, 15 not available and 71 unknowns.

25. The Mid Sussex Partnership Board has awarded a three-year £30,000 per annum contract to Runway Training starting in January 2023. The service will act as an engagement and prevention service for NEETs by increasing the young people's skills and abilities to enable them to remain in learning or make a positive transition into education, employment, or training. The Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan also includes a commitment to contributing £21,427 to West Sussex County Council's Think Futures service to support NEETs in Mid Sussex.
26. The Council's Community Engagement and Events Officer leads a forum of professionals from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, Better Young Lives, to ensure better lives and outcomes for children and young people. The current number of partners is 66 representing 36 organisations. Three meetings are held per year with updates given by local organisations on the services provided. Issues discussed at meetings of the Better Young Lives Group in 2022 have included: mental health and well-being of young people and appropriate services in the area; recruitment of staff for organisations; managing changes in organisations; support for young carers; safe places to meet with young people; and finding suitable secure meeting rooms for professionals to meet 1:1.

27. Specific action in 2022 included:

- a. Play Days on Tour took place over the Summer holidays provided at 10 locations across the district, with lots of free activities to join in with for local families. These were held at Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Cuckfield, Balcombe, East Grinstead, Crawley Down, Copthorne and Ashurst Wood.
- b. Skate Fests events were provided in the Summer at Victoria Park, Haywards Heath, Bolnore Village and King George's Field East Grinstead. This included a DJ taking requests and running mixing workshops.
- c. The Council worked with Burgess Hill Town Council to provide free ice skating and Christmas family fun to Burgess Hill town centre.
- d. The 2022 Mid Sussex Applauds awards recognised the contribution made by young people in the District through the young achiever and the young volunteer of the year awards.
- e. An event was held in February to celebrate the launch of the Pump Track in Bolney. The Pump Track is 80 metres long and is surfaced with tarmac to create a smooth ride and ensure children are able to use it all year round. The course has been specifically designed so that it can be used by riders of all ability levels.
- f. Students from every local senior school and college gathered in the Mid Sussex District Council Chamber for the launch of the Mid Sussex STEM challenge 2022. STEM education, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics provides an excellent grounding for students who wish to pursue a career in medicine, scientific research, chemistry or engineering.

Race

28. Information from the 2021 census showed that the BAME (non-White British) population in Mid Sussex has increased from 9.7% to 14.2% since 2011, with the main increase in the “White Other” Group from 3.8% to 5.2%. The biggest other ethnicity in Mid Sussex is Asian or Asian British: Indian at 1.6%.
29. The latest Census data also showed that the percentage of the population in Mid Sussex where their country of birth is outside of the UK has increased from 9.7% in 2011 to 11.9% in 2021. The national figures for England and Wales show an increase from 13.4% to 16.8%. The 5 most numerous non- UK populations in the District were from India, South Africa, Ireland, Romania and Poland.
30. **Specific action in 2022 included:**
 - a. The Council continues to work with Citizens Advice to engage with local minority communities to improve access to support, information and services. The Community Champions project finds informal volunteers in our community to be champions; to share information at a community level and to help develop preventative messaging to ensure they are more effective across all of the District’s diverse communities. The Council awarded a grant of £4,984 to set up language café sessions through the project, working with Aspire adult education.
 - b. Also through the Community Champions Scheme, the Council has awarded a grant of £5,000 to Citizens Advice to fund an engagement project with Ukrainian refugees in Mid Sussex to provide information and connect them with the local communities.
 - c. The Council continues to manage the Bedelands site at Burgess Hill, which provides 9 plots for Gypsies and Travellers and has been working with residents to promote their welfare.

Sexual Orientation

31. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on sexual orientation for those aged 16 years and over. 2.63% of the Mid Sussex population answered as LGB+, with 1.33% gay or lesbian and 1.06% bisexual. The local authority with the largest LGB+ population was Brighton and Hove at 10.7%.
32. Hate crime reporting on the basis of homophobia continues to be reported through the Community Safety Partnership.

Religion or Belief

33. Information from the 2021 census shows that 47.9% of Mid Sussex residents stated their religion as Christian, compared to 62.7% in 2011. The second largest group was no religion at 42.1%, compared to 26.6% in 2011. Of the remaining who stated their religion, responses were spread across a number of faiths, with Muslim being the largest at 1.2%.
34. Churches and other places of worship are often the first to recognise problems in their local communities and many offer help to vulnerable people who are affected. The

Council's work in this area centres upon countering religiously motivated hate crime, helping to promote good relations between the different faiths in Mid Sussex and using our links with faith-based groups to provide access to services.

35. Our Housing Needs and Benefits Teams refer people to the Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead Foodbanks, which have connections to local churches. Vouchers are provided which can be redeemed for three days of emergency food.

Sex

36. 2021 Census information showed a split in Mid Sussex of 78,500 women (51.5%) and 74,066 (48.5%) men, compared to the 2011 split of 51% to 49%.
37. The Wellbeing Team have been running the MEN programme (Motivation, Exercise, Nutrition) a 12-week programme designed to give men support to make changes working towards a healthy lifestyle. Additional funding was secured in partnership with WSCC Public Health to deliver three males only groups. Statistical trends revealed a low uptake from men on weight management courses and so a tailored approach was required. The service successfully enrolled 23 men and the men only programme will now be a part of the normal wellbeing service offer in 2022/23.
38. The Wellbeing Team are also providing menopause advice as part of their Community Health Talks and Workplace Health programmes.
39. The Council provided a Community grant of £9,500 to Carers Support West Sussex to fund a project to identify and engage with male carers in Mid Sussex.

Men and Women Suffering Domestic Abuse

40. An important aspect of our service provision related to the protected characteristic of sex is the assistance provided for people suffering domestic abuse. The number of recorded domestic abuse crimes in Mid Sussex in 2022 was 1,077 compared to 1,052 crimes in 2021. The Council's Housing Options service deals with homelessness cases involving domestic abuse and refers cases to the support available.
41. There are a range of services and initiatives available in Mid Sussex aimed at responding to domestic abuse. These include the Worth Specialist Domestic Abuse Service which supports people at high risk of harm or homicide as a result of domestic abuse. They have teams of IDVAs (independent domestic abuse advisors) across West Sussex who work to identify, assess and assist people at risk.
42. There is Safe in Sussex, a registered charity providing help and support for people affected by domestic abuse in West Sussex. They provide emergency refuges, drop-in centres and one to one help and practical support for anyone affected by domestic abuse. Also, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) brings together responsible agencies in West Sussex to discuss those cases with the highest risk of harm.

Gender Reassignment

43. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on gender identity. In Mid Sussex, 0.32% had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth. 0.07% identified as a trans woman, 0.06% a trans man and 0.05% as non-binary.
44. Our hate crime incident reporting includes the recording of hate crime motivated by transphobia, which refers to various kinds of aversion towards transsexual people.

45. With regard to gender identity issues amongst young people, the Council's Community Engagement and Events Officer leads a forum called Better Young Lives, which provides an opportunity to share information and network. The group has discussed support services available for young people facing gender identity and wider LGBTQ+ issues.
46. A page has been developed for the Council's website – "Information for Parents and Carers of Teens" – recognising that Parenting teenagers can be challenging, and many parents find it hard to adapt to changes in their child's behaviour as they grow up. This includes specific information and support advice for LGBTQ+ young people and can be found at [Information for Parents and Carers of Teens - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

Residential Location

47. The Council recognises that whether our residents live in a rural or urban location can affect how they access our services. Issues from rural isolation include transport difficulties for those dependent upon public transport, high local housing prices and a lack of community facilities.
48. Supporting local communities
 - a. The Council's Investment Plan for the use of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund includes investment of £245,000 over three years in the community hubs being developed in areas of relative deprivation within the District's three towns. These are at Bentswood, Haywards Heath; Stonequarry at East Grinstead, where the hub has moving into expanded accommodation at the Old Post Office, and the Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill. Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) are based at the Cherry Tree accommodation, which has been provided through the Council following Age UK's move from the building as a day centre.
 - b. A Community Grant of £820 was awarded to Family Support Work to fund the setup of an informal, drop-in group for isolated parents and carers of children at the Bentswood Hub.
 - c. A grant of £495 was awarded to the Maple Drive Community Group to hold a Summer Fun afternoon at Leylands Field, Burgess Hill.

49. Community facilities and Housing Initiatives

- a) The Kings Weald Community Centre has opened, built by Croudace Home as part of development at the former Keymer Brick and Tile site in Burgess Hill. The centre is a spacious and modern intergenerational space offering a range of possibilities for groups, activities, and events. The building is being managed on behalf of the Council by Age UK.
- b) New affordable housing delivered in 2021/22 included 174 outside of the three main towns of which 114 were in rural villages.

Income or Skill Level

50. The District is generally prosperous, but there are pockets of deprivation in each of the three main towns. Worklessness is more prevalent amongst those in social housing and people on low incomes are also in a growing danger of suffering from

fuel poverty, given the recent rises in energy costs. The Council has been closely monitoring the cost of living issues facing Mid Sussex residents. Citizens Advice information shows more requests for advice based on financial worries and debts. There has also been an increase in the use of food banks in the District.

51. Specific action in 2022 included:

- a. A cost of living support page has been provided on the Council's website [Cost of Living Support - Mid Sussex District Council](#) to provide information on the support available in the District.
- b. In addition to being able to refer people to foodbanks, the Council is now providing its own voucher scheme for food and white goods. This provides for eligible people who are struggling to feed themselves or their family in the short term to receive £25 food vouchers per person or up to £200 in vouchers towards the purchase of white goods.
- c. 349 new affordable housing units were delivered in 2021/22, 299 for rent and 50 shared ownership. A further 288 new affordable homes have been delivered in the period April to December 2022.
- d. The Council's Housing Needs Team assisted 67 households to access private rented sector accommodation in 2021/22 and a further 7 in the period April to December 2022.
- e. A grant of £2,545 was awarded to IMPACT Foundation to support 30 families in need with individual and group cooking sessions. The Tasty Team provide cooking sessions, budgeting help and general nutritional advice to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families in Mid Sussex.

Support for the Armed Forces Community

52. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on whether anyone in the household has an armed forces connection. 4,673 people in Mid Sussex, 3.8% of usual residents aged 16 and over, reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. This is consistent with the national figure of 3.8%.
53. Mid Sussex District Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant in September 2014, which is a statement of mutual support between the District Council and the local Armed Forces community. The Council also received the Bronze Employer Recognition Scheme award in January 2018, which shows support for the Armed Forces community through its employment policies. We will aspire to receive the silver award and provide Armed Forces awareness training to staff and Members.
54. Initiatives associated with this have included the adoption of a guaranteed interview scheme for suitably qualified applicants with an armed forces connection and proper recognition in the Council's employment policies of provision for members of the Reserve Forces.
55. The main Council service that has had contact with veterans, reservists or active members of the Armed Forces is Housing. The Housing Register identifies those with an armed forces connection as they are exempted from the usual requirements to have a local connection. The Housing Needs Team provides specialist advice and support to homeless ex-forces people and liaises with organisations such as the armed forces charity SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association).

56. The Council continues to publicise the Heroes Welcome Scheme and there are 12 businesses signed up to the scheme in Haywards Heath.

57. A Platinum Jubilee grant was awarded to the Royal Sussex Regiment Association Mid Sussex Branch to fund a screening of Trooping of the Colours followed by afternoon tea for members and friends of the Regiment.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND THE COUNCIL'S STAFF

58. In addition to looking at improvements to services in the context of equality and diversity, this progress report also provides information about the Council's staff. As part of the requirement to publish Equality Data, we produce an annual monitoring report about the composition of our staff compared to the background Mid Sussex population. This includes information about age, sex, gender pay gap and ethnicity and is published on the Council's website <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/my-council/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-data/>

59. At the end of December 2022, the Council had 295 employees (268 full-time equivalents), 212 full-time and 83 part-time, with the following profile:

- 118 (40%) are men and 177 (60%) women
- 60% of senior managers (defined as the top 5% of earners) are women
- 23 (7.80%) have identified themselves as disabled
- 13 (4.4%) are from ethnic minority communities
- 1 (0.3%) is under 21 years of age
- 21 (7.1%) are 21-29
- 53 (18.0%) are 30-39
- 83 (28.1%) are 40-49
- 102 (34.6%) are 50-59
- 35 (11.9%) are over 60.

60. The Council's gender pay gap in 2021/22 was 15.0% calculated by comparing the mean average male and female employee pay. This compares to 11.9% in 2020/21. The median average gender pay gap for 2021/22 was 15.7%, compared to 10.8% in the previous year. The 2022 ONS national median average pay gap was 14.9% for all employees and 12.1% nationally for local government administrative staff. The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because of their sex.

61. The Council is required to submit this gender pay gap information to Government, together with the proportion of males and females in each of four pay quartiles as shown below for 2021/22:

Upper Quartile	Men 61.8%	Women 38.2%
Upper Middle Quartile	Men 42.9%	Women 57.1%
Lower Middle Quartile	Men 27.3%	Women 72.7%
Lower Quartile	Men 27.3%	Women 72.7%

62. The 2021/22 gender pay gap is calculated as at 31st March 2022. Since then, the gender pay gap at 31st January 2023 has reduced to 10.9% for the mean and 12.2% for the median. The planned completion this year of a job evaluation exercise is also expected to help to address pay gap issues.

63. For staff with a disability, the Council is a “Disability Confident Committed” employer, recognising our commitment to the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. This includes a commitment to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.

Equality and Diversity Training

64. All recent new starters at the Council have received equality and diversity training. This has had an emphasis on understanding unconscious bias. All staff are also required to complete an equality and diversity on-line training module.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

65. The Council completes impact assessments where there are major changes to a service area or new policies. The assessments identify opportunities to promote equality and the barriers to services/differential impact on the protected groups in Mid Sussex and disadvantage arising from income or skill level and by virtue of where people live. They also consider issues for the armed forces community.
66. The assessments that have been completed in 2022 are:
- Sustainable Economy Strategy
 - Modern Slavery Transparency Statement
 - Introduction of new Smart Pay payments system
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
 - Virtual Parking Dispensation System
 - Pay Policy Statement
 - Public Space Protection Order Car Cruising
67. Completed impact assessments are included with relevant Committee reports and published on the Council's website. These can be found at <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/my-council/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessment/>
68. There is also a standard section in all of the Council's reports to Members, which assesses the “Equality and Customer Services Implications” of the actions referred to in the report.

Appendix A

Census 2021 Headline Information for Mid Sussex

The main changes since the 2011 Census are:

- the population has aged with an increase of 24.5% in people aged 65 years and over, a 51% increase in Mid Sussex of those aged 70 – 74 and 35% increase in 75 - 79 year olds.
- the percentage of retired people has increased from 14.7% to 23.92%.
- the biggest changes in religious belief have been a 15.5% increase in those stating as having no religion to 42.1% and a 14.8% reduction in those stating Christian to 47.9%. Of the remaining who stated their religion, responses were spread across a number of faiths, with Muslim being the largest at 1.2%.
- the BAME population (non-White British) in Mid Sussex has increased from 9.7% to 14.2%, with the main increase in the White Other Group from 3.8% to 5.2%. The biggest other ethnicity in Mid Sussex is Asian or Asian British: Indian at 1.6%.
- 11.9% of Mid Sussex residents have a non-UK country of birth or passport compared to 9.7% in 2011. The top 5 most numerous non- UK populations in Mid Sussex are from India, South Africa, Ireland, Romania and Poland.
- 5% of Mid Sussex residents are disabled under the Equality Act with their day to day activities limited a lot and 9.2% limited a little, compared to 5.8% and 8.4% respectively in 2011.
- 13% of Mid Sussex residents provide unpaid care, 4.5% 1-19 hours per week, 1.2% 20-49 hours per week and 1.9% over 50 hours per week.

Some of the new questions in the census showed that for Mid Sussex:

- 0.32% had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth
- 2.63% of the population answered as LGB+, with 1.33% gay or lesbian and 1.06% bisexual
- 3.8% of the adult population of Mid Sussex have previously served in the armed forces, which is line with the national figure.

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