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20 November 2020

To: All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dear Member,

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 23rd November, 2020

I attach a copy of the following reports for the above-mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda:

- 8. LEADER'S UPDATE ON PRIORITIES AND COVID-19 RESPONSE.  
(PAGES 1 - 14)**
  
- 12. COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT (PAGES 15 - 34)**

Yours sincerely

Philip Slawther, Principal Committee Co-ordinator  
Principal Committee Co-Ordinator

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# Covid-19: Phase 1 Recovery and Phase 2 Response

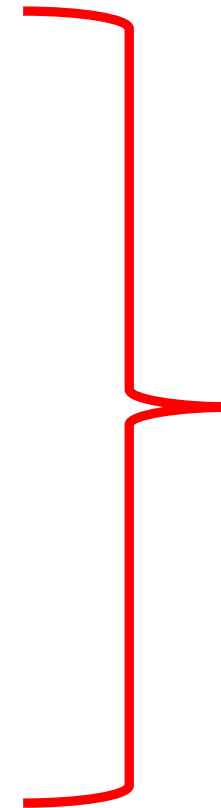
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Report for Overview and Scrutiny

Cllr Joseph Ejiofor, Leader  
Zina Etheridge, Chief Executive

# Since the end of May

- Phased re-opening of Council services
- Support for the safe re-opening of local economy
- Continued support for public health messaging
- Proactive enforcement of Covid restrictions – working with the Police
- Local outbreak management
- Increasing access to testing
- Community support
- Supporting the safe re-opening of schools in September
- Council-wide process to learn from Wave 1
- Recovery and Renewal alongside MTFS



Against the backdrop  
of a constantly  
changing local and  
national context and  
restrictions

# Re-opening of Council Services (1/10)

As restrictions eased there was a planned and phased re-opening/re-starting of Council services. Underpinned by a strong risk-assessment process including the Health and Safety and Public Health teams. This included:

- Customer services
- Libraries
- Parking enforcement
- Playground and MUGAs
- Park Road and Tottenham Green leisure centres
- HfH non-urgent repairs
- Bruce Castle museum and archive
- Bruce Grove Youth Centre and the holiday activities programme

Other services eg Waste collection and enforcement continued throughout

# Support for the safe re-opening of the local economy (2/10)

- Practical advice and support for businesses to re-open in a Covid-secure way – working with partners including Wood Green BID
- Supporting queue management in Wood Green during initial period after the re-opening of non-essential retail
- Pavement widening across the borough to support safe queuing
- Proactive education and engagement with restaurants, particularly during Eat Out to Help Out, to promote Covid-safe operation
- Promoting 'Shop Local' message on lamp posts and other communications materials and channels

# Support for public health messaging (3/10)

- On-going and proactive communications campaign to promote the core public health messaging including:
  - Weekly update setting out all the key information and messages from Dr Will Maimaris, backed up with regular videos
  - Targeted materials in key community languages
  - Social media collateral aimed at younger audiences
  - Lamp post banners, digital screens and significant signage in parks
  - 3 letters to every household in the borough to ensure key messages reach households without digital access

# Proactive enforcement of Covid restrictions – working with the Police (4/10)

- Working with the Police, Communications, Public Health and Economic Development, we have taken a proactive approach to enforcement throughout.
- Focused our activities on high foot fall areas and town centers such as Wood Green, West Green Road, Tottenham High Road, Muswell Hill, Crouch end.
- Since the end of the initial lockdown, the focus has been to ensure businesses comply with their statutory duties in relation to Test and Trace, Health & Safety, Infectious Disease and Outbreak Control.
- Throughout, the service has been working extensively with Police and meet twice a week. As things have developed the Police have increased their resources to meet the increasing workload associated with managing the new regulations, laws that have been implemented. This is welcome.



# Local Outbreak Management (5/10)

- As the first lockdown came to an end the local role in outbreak management was acknowledged by Government and began to develop
- Developed and published a Local Outbreak Management Plan
- Significant, targeted work based on local data in areas with higher incidence particularly in the South East of the Borough
- Close monitoring and partnership working with care homes, schools, and care providers

# Increasing access to testing locally (6/10)

- Testing continues to be largely run and overseen at a national level via NHS Test and Trace. However, we have successfully advocated and facilitated improved local access to testing including:
  - Alexandra Palace moved from mobile test site operating intermittently to a full Local Test Site open throughout the week
  - Additional Local Test Site opened at the Irish Centre.
  - Additional Stamford Hill site is now open
- The potential for the use of rapid Lateral Flow testing in Haringey is being explored

# Community support (7/10)

Communities, mutual aid groups, and the voluntary and community sector played a hugely positive role in the first phase of the pandemic. We have continued to work closely with our communities in particular through the Community Enablement Group and Food Network. Alongside the Multi Faith Forum, VCS Forum, Bridge Renewal Trust and with Mutual Aid Groups via Connected Communities. This has included:

- Established Haringey Together as an online hub for getting and receiving support.
- Practical advice and support to the Haringey VCS throughout the pandemic including supporting access to external Covid response funding, guidance on reopening community settings, £500k of grant funding to support organisations with unavoidable costs and £100k for a rent break for community groups in Council buildings. This support is being continued with the establishment of a joint VCS Support Team working alongside the Bridge Renewal Trust to increase capacity building support for the sector on an ongoing basis.
- Created a local Food Partnership, working with our local Food Banks and other partners to collaboratively manage supply and need and to build a holistic support offer which addresses the causes of food need.

# Supporting the safe re-opening of schools (8/10)

- Regular meetings with Heads throughout the pandemic – twice weekly during the most critical periods
- Proactive support ahead of initial re-opening in summer and then full re-opening in September including
  - Support with risk assessments
  - Health and Safety advice
  - Public Health support
  - Advice and support where confirmed cases have arisen
- On-going work in partnership with Haringey Education Partnership to support best practise and peer support for remote and blended learning

# Council-wide process to learn from Wave 1 (9/10)

- All areas of the Council have reviewed the response to the first phase of the pandemic including learning points
- Review of efficacy of GOLD arrangements and establishment of SILVER board to provide additional operation level oversight
- Contributed to partner learning processes

# Recovery and Renewal alongside MTFS (10/10)

- Structured R&R process reflecting the significant and diverse impacts of the pandemic on the borough, the Council and our partners
- Three key themes emerged:
  - economic recovery
  - health and wellbeing
  - strengthening our communities
- These are now informing our budget and MTFS processes for 2021 and beyond and will be reflected in a 'refresh' of the Borough Plan next year

# Financial position of the Council

- 2020/21 position has improved with further resources coming from Government. However, this still does not meet the total cost of the pandemic to the authority.
- Impact on HRA has improved, but still forecast to impact by £4m in current year, due to reduced rent collections
- Draft 2021/22 budget will go to December Cabinet – this will show a worsened position from this time last year and a budget gap for next year before new savings of c. £17m, but with plans to ensure the Council sets a balanced budget for next year
- The Council will only be able to set a balanced budget if new savings proposals are agreed
- £1m for Haringey announced for the new Winter Grants scheme for support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals

# Covid challenges going forward

We are working on a planning scenario of:

- Coming out of lockdown on the PM's announced date
- London as a region will then move into one of the tiers – note we were in tier 2 previously
- Likely to be ongoing discouragement of indoor social mixing;
- Events like return of university students and Christmas may increase infection rates again and we need to be prepared for moving between tiers if infection rates do rise significantly (or reduce)
- Council officers are working through a range of scenarios to make sure we are prepared for future, including the interplay with end of the Brexit transition period.
- Looking forward we will be working hard with health colleagues to ensure that as Covid vaccinations become available all of our residents can access it, we ensure that those communities that suffer from health inequalities are reached, and communication is culturally competent.
- Councils increasingly being asked to take on more responsibility for testing and tracing.
- Continuing to roll out a 4 Es approach to supporting residents and businesses to stick to the guidance and rules



**Report for:** Overview and Scrutiny – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020

**Title:** Combined Complaints, Member Enquiries, Freedom of Information Request and Ombudsman Annual Report 2019/2020

**Report authorised by:** Richard Grice: Director of Customers, Transformation & Resources

**Lead Officer:** Debbie Darling: Acting Corporate Feedback & Business Support Manager  
Tel: 0208 489 4763  
Email: Debbie.darling@haringey.gov.uk

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/ Non-Key Decision:** Non-Key

## Introduction

This report summarises Member Enquiries, complaints, Ombudsman caseload and FOI activity alongside performance from the 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

To provide some context to the report, it is estimated that we have nearly 1 million interactions/ enquiries with residents and businesses throughout Haringey council in any given year. Below provides a breakdown on how many customer interactions were had across some of the services where our residents interact with us the most.

## Revenues & Benefits

- 143,532 customer interactions. This figure includes data received from the DWP. Within this figure were a collective 70,496 of which were new claims, change of circumstances, general correspondence and where the customer has made contact via Customer services.
- 96,448 incoming documents for Council Tax in the financial year Apr 19 – Mar 20.
- 7,500 Business Rates customer interactions

## Customer Services & Libraries

- 129,579 customers served in the face to face contact
- 325,752 telephone calls answered
- 168,763 processing correspondence this was either online or email enquiries

## E&N

- 31,312 Our Haringey customer interactions for Parks, Waste Enforcement and Highways

- 444 Clinical waste service requests

## Adults

- 18,927 call handled
- 4325 referrals
- 1800 assessments completed
- 773 re-enablement completed

Therefore, the number of complaints and concerns received accounts for less than <1% of our customer interactions.

## 1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This is the annual report and analysis of Complaints, Ombudsman Cases, Member Enquiries and Freedom of Information Requests for the period 2019/2020.
- 1.2 Previously these have been separate reports, however in order to provide a full overview of the whole area they have been merged into one document under separate headings.

## 2. Input Requested from Overview & Scrutiny

- 2.1 It is requested that Overview & Scrutiny note the contents of the report.

## 3. Complaints

- 3.1 Haringey Council welcomes feedback and complaints and has set challenging targets to respond to 95% of Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days and 80% of Independent Reviews (second stage complaints) within 25 working days.
- 3.2 The Feedback team merged with the Feedback and Information Governance team (FIG in the last quarter of 2019 and are now called the Corporate Feedback Team. This team now administer complaints at the first stage as well as administer and investigate second stage complaints- Independent Reviews. The team sits under the Corporate and Customer Services directorate.
- 3.3 The majority of complaints are received electronically through email or via an online form. In order to encourage channel-shift hard copy paper forms have been removed from public access points and the direct email/postal address for the complaints team is not publicised, however we are able to provide paper copies if the customer is unable to make a complaint through other means.
- 3.4 Our aim is to continue to drive the use of the e-form online as it is the preferred method to receive complaints which allows the request to be directed to the appropriate place to enable a timelier response.

3.5

Method	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Email	56%	60%	58%	58%
Online form	31%	30%	35%	38%
Letter	9%	6%	4%	3%
Phone Call	4%	3%	3%	1%

3.6 As per the following table, there has been a pleasing reduction in complaints received however this shows a performance decrease of 4% for 2019/2020 compared to 2018/2019 for Stage 1 complaints.

	Volume % Replied to on time 2016/17	Volume % Replied to on time 2017/18	Volume % Replied to on time 2018/19	Volume % Replied to on time 2019/20
Stage 1 Complaints	1,896 89%	1,396 85%	1,516 87%	1326 83%
Children's Social Care Complaints	16 56%	21 71%	31 68%	17 53%
Adults Social Care Complaints	61 100%	56 96%	72 93%	72 89%

- 3.7 Children's Social Care complaint volumes have seen a pleasing decrease by 46% however a further 10% reduction with performance in responding on time. Adults received the same number of complaints as the previous year with a slight decrease in performance in responding on time.
- 3.8 Where it is accepted that the authority is at fault in some way the complaint is "upheld". 43% of first stage complaints were upheld in 2019/20 an increase for the first time in 3 years.
- 3.9 The following table below shows the upheld rate across the different service areas. The majority of upheld complaints were for the three council services that received the most complaints and relate to non-collection of rubbish, poor standard of service, lack of timely response, communication and staff behaviour.
- 3.10 There were 172 complaints around staff behaviour a reduction of 16% from 2018/19. Key themes across the services were poor attitude and being rude or unhelpful on the telephone or face to face and behaviour of Civil Enforcement officers or Social Workers When investigated 94 of these 172 were upheld. These were remedied with apologies where appropriate and further training or guidance for those staff.
- 3.11 Training is available on FUSE (the corporate learning and development tool) on roles and responsibilities for all staff in relation to complaint handling. Recently the Corporate Induction session was enhanced to highlight this for new joiners. Additionally, the induction pack has been updated to provide weblinks for easy access for staff.
- 3.12 There will be a focus in the Corporate Management Group in the next couple of months reviewing roles and responsibilities in managing cases. Providing quality responses will be a key area to focus on as we move forward, and we will look at early intervention to provide the best outcome for our residents

Service Area	% of Complaints Upheld
Environmental Services and Neighbourhoods	31%
Corporate & Customer Services	40%
Customer Services & Libraries	44%
All other Services	32%

\*For this reporting year we have been unable to split the Customer Services and Libraries data following the restructure in Respond in February 2020 however this will be reflective in next year's data.

\*All other services include, Adults, Commissioning, Strategy & Communication, Public Health, Shared Digital, Schools and Learning and Children services \*

3.13 The following table shows the five Service Areas that received the most complaints in 2019/20. As expected, they are also the service areas that interact most with residents.

Service Area	No. of Complaints	% of Total Complaints Received
Revenues	240	18%
Commissioning & Client (including on street waste)	226	17%
Contact Centre	207	16%
E & N Operations	204	15%
Community Safety & Enforcement	79	6%

- 3.14 The following table shows the top reasons why people submit complaints. 2019/20 data shows a shift from 2018/19. Previously the majority of complaint reasons were showing as inadequate /inaccurate communication. It is now showing as poor standard of service.
- 3.15 Although the data shows a shift this year in “Poor Standard of Service” being the top reason for submitting complaints, Inadequate inaccurate information is a close second reason for complaints. The aim of the Partnership Improvement Group will be to focus on these two areas to really understand how we learn, address and resolve the issues experienced by our residents. This includes complaints that may be cross-directorate.

Complaint Reason	%
Poor standard of service	41%
Inadequate /inaccurate information	37%
Employee Behaviour	9%
Failure to provide a service	8%
Dissatisfaction with policy/decision	5%

#### Independent Reviews (Stage 2 Complaints)

- 3.16 The Corporate Feedback Team reviews stage one complaints for both the Council and Homes for Haringey. The following table shows a small decrease in volumes for this year whilst still performing above the target of 80%.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Volume	402	280	358	282
% responded to on-time (Target 80%)	84%	87%	92%	88%

- 3.17 All first stage responses give the complainant details on how to escalate their complaint if they remain dissatisfied, a total of 21% took their complaints to the next stage. Of the 282 investigated, a total of 29% were upheld or partially upheld. This is an increase in of 3% on the previous year. The following table below breaks this information down across Service Areas.

HFH upheld or partially upheld complaint cases were about communication, delays in responding to reported issues, missed appointments and poor service.

Corporate and Customer service upheld, or partially upheld complaints were due to recovery of enforcement agents costs, problems applying for a parking permit, lack of response to emails and failing to close an account

Environment and Neighbourhoods upheld, or partially upheld complaint cases were due to missed refuse collections, lack of action on car dealership, road sweeping or lack of communication.

Service Area	No of IRs	% of Total IRs received	No. upheld / partly upheld	% of total upheld / partly upheld cases
Homes for Haringey	127	45%	49	39%
Corporate & Customer Services	58	20%	11	19%
Environment & neighbourhoods	46	16%	10	22%
Planning Building & Sustainability	12	4%	0	0%
Customer Services & Libraries	8	3%	2	25%
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	8	3%	1	12%
Corporate Governance	6	2%	2	33%
Children's Services - Early Help and Prevention	5	2%	0	0%
Commissioning	4	1%	1	25%
Adult Social Services	4	1%	2	50%
Housing	2	1%	1	1%
Schools & Learning	1	1%	1	50%
Capital Projects and Property	1	1%	1	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81</b>	

### Complaints Next Steps

- 3.18 The Feedback and FIG team have now merged and are called the Corporate Feedback Team and the priority for the Service will be to continue working in partnership across Haringey with all business units.
- 3.19 Stakeholder meetings with the Managing Director of Homes for Haringey continue to be held monthly to review and discuss the complaints performance to understand how they can improve. Specifically, on timeliness of responses alongside learnings from cases upheld, focusing on the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman cases.
- 3.20 The work to upgrade the Respond IT system to the latest version to support with logging and managing cases remains the focus as part of the Customer First (formerly known as FOBO) programme
- 3.21 The automation programme will create capacity in the team to undertake quality checking on stage one complaints. The learning from these will form part of the Partnership Improvement Group discussions.

## Compliments

3.18 We record compliments from residents whether it be by email, letter, online or via a manager.

We received 80 between April 19 – March 20 and the table below provides a breakdown of the service area complimented.

This compliments table in the report is new this year and will be included in the report going forward.

Service Area	No. of Compliments
Adult Social Services	22
Corporate & Customer Services	21
Children's Services – Safeguarding & Social Care	12
Customer Service & Libraries	10
Schools & Learning	5
Environment & Neighbourhood	4
Children Services Early Help & Prevention	2
Commissioning	2
Corporate Governance	1
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	1
Total	80

## 4. Member Enquiries

4.1 In 2019/2020 a total of 2460 enquiries were received from Members including enquiries on behalf of customers and residents from Haringey Councillors (82%) and Members of Parliament (18%). This is a decrease of 13% from 2018/19.

4.2 The target is to respond to 95% of Member Enquiries within the 10 working days. In 2019/20 the response rate was 88%.

4.3 The following table shows the comparative performance data across the last three years

4.4 As requested in the previous OSC committee 2176 of the 2460 enquiries were responded to on time. Of these 284 were responded to late showing an average of 5 days delay.

4.5 We are exploring automation options that will offer Members an easy way to log and track their ME casework, this is in the very early stages.

	Number	% Replied to on-time
2019/20	2,460	88%
2018/19	2,778	92%
2017/18	2,249	89%

- 4.6 The following table shows the breakdown of Member Enquiries received across service areas for 2019/20.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>No. of ME's 2019/20</b>	<b>% of Total ME's</b>
Environment & Neighbourhoods	1465	60%
Corporate & Customer services	283	11%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	179	7%
Adult Social Services	98	4%
Commissioning	75	3%
Schools and Learning	71	3%
Housing	62	2%
Children's Services- Safeguarding & Social Care	42	2%
Customer Services & Libraries	36	1%
Capital Projects and Property	31	1%
Regeneration & Economic Development	30	1%
Children's Services - Early Help & Prevention	30	1%
Corporate Governance	26	1%
Strategy and Communications	15	<1%
Public Health	7	<1%
Finance	3	<1%
Digital Services	3	<1%
HR & OD	2	<1%
Transformation and Resources	1	<1%
Construction related project Delivery	1	<1%

- 4.7 The following table breaks this information down further for the top 3 service areas.

<b>Environment &amp; Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>60%</b>
Operations	41%
Community Safety & Enforcement	29%
Commissioning & Client	28%
Organisational Resilience	1%
Procurement	1%

<b>Corporate &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>11%</b>
Revenues	41%
Benefits	30%
Contact Centre	9%
Finance Operations	7%
Corporate Feedback Team	5%
Library Services	3%



Business Change	2%
HR Strategy and Reward	1%
SSC HR Operations	1%
Customer Service Centres	1%

<b>Planning, Building Standards &amp; Sustainability</b>	<b>7%</b>
Development Management and Planning	59%
Planning Policy & Transport Planning	29%
Building Control	6%
Carbon Management	5%
Business Development & Technical Support	1%

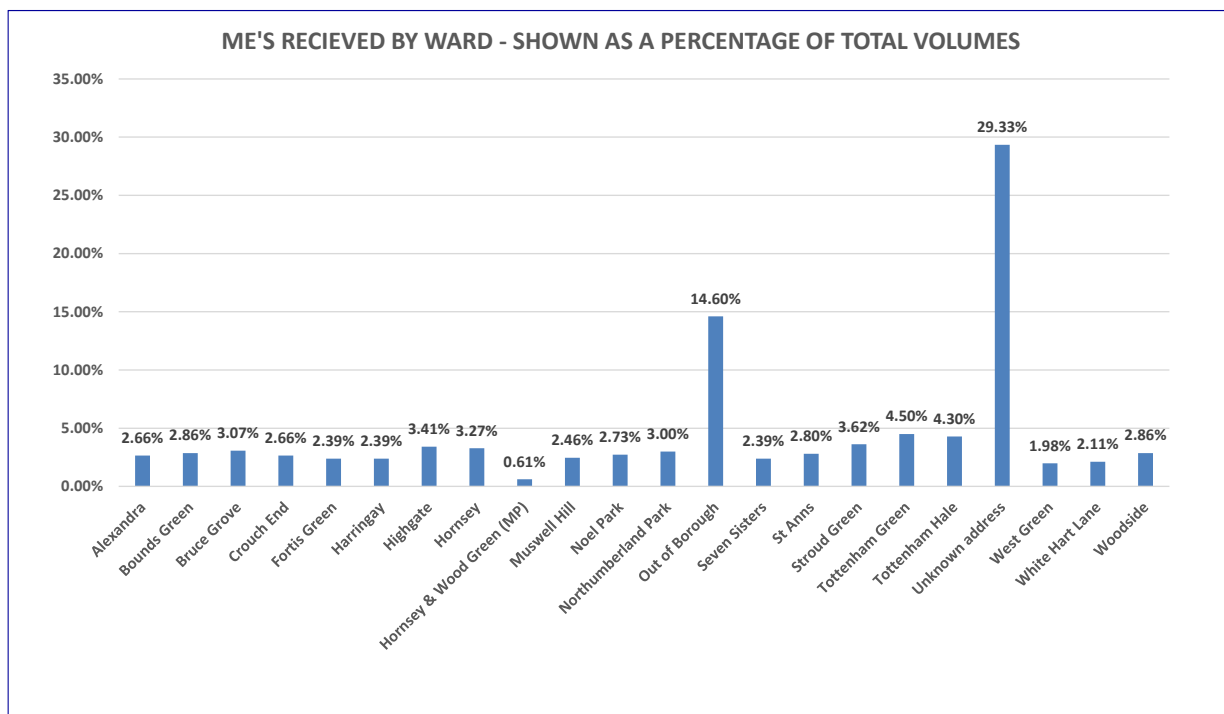
Below gives a breakdown of issues raised in the enquiries

<b>Nature of Enquiry</b>	
General Information / Service Request	76%
Poor standard of service	8%
Inadequate / Inaccurate Communication	8%
Dissatisfaction with policy / decision	4%
Failure to provide a service	3%
Employee Behaviour	1%

- 4.8 A total of 88% of Member Enquiries were requests for information or Service Requests.
- 4.9 Haringey Council has been taking continued steps to encourage residents to self-serve via apps or through the website as this is the most efficient way to report such matters due to the integration with current operating systems managed by both Homes for Haringey and Veolia (our external Waste Management contractor) rather than raise them via their Councillors.

The below graph shows the collective total in percentage of the 2460 Member Enquiries received by ward.

This was asked for following the last OSC meeting, therefore it has been included in this year's report. The high percentage of ME's showing as unknown address is where we did not have an address on the enquiry therefore, we could not allocate this to a ward.



### Member Enquiries Next Steps

- 4.10 We recognise the importance of feedback and its value in shaping our service delivery. We are currently facing challenging times across the Council with fewer resources and higher demand, notwithstanding that we continue to emphasise the importance of responding to Feedback and MEs.
- 4.11 Going forward our aim is to continue to work with the Councillors and MP's to improve the Service Requests and Member Enquiries process to allow us to issue a timely response.

### Freedom of Information (FOI)

- 4.12 The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act was introduced in 2005 with its purpose being to make authorities and public bodies more open and transparent with the information they hold.
- 4.13 The FOI Act and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) are very similar and are dealt with through the same process. The figures given below are for both FOI and EIR requests.
- 4.14 Public Authorities should respond to FOI / EIR requests within 20 working days from the date the request was received.
- 4.15 All requests must be received in writing and Haringey has a dedicated online form and email address for this.
- 4.16 In line with best practice, Haringey has been proactively publishing more data and information online and has a disclosure log, which shows all requests received and responses issued. In addition, a full performance report is published online.

- 4.17 Between April 2019 and March 2020 Haringey responded to a total of 1384 requests, a decrease from the previous year. 86% of responses were sent within 20 days. The following table shows the performance across the past 5 years.

Year	No. of requests	% on time
2019-2020	1384	86%
2018-2019	1434	82%
2017-2018	1352	83%
2016-2017	1471	87%
2015-2016	1494	89%

- 4.18 There are cases where information was not provided to the requestor either because it was not held or there was a cost attached to it.

Information not Provided	Total	% of Total requests
Information not held	210	15%
Information not given due to cost	33	2%

- 4.19 In addition to these requests there were a further 139 cases (10%) where an exemption was applied. Both the FOI and EIR Acts contain exemptions that allow Public Authorities to withhold information in certain cases.

FOI - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Section 31 – Law Enforcement	49	35%
Section 40 – Personal Information	35	25%
Section 43 – Commercial Interests	18	13%
Section 21 – Info accessible by some other means	11	8%
Section 22 – Intended for future publication	10	7%
Section 24 – National Security	6	4%
Section 42 – Legal Professional Privilege	2	1%
Section 38 - Health and Safety	2	1%
Section 36 – Effective Conduct of Public Affairs	1	<1%
Section 30 - Investigations and proceedings by public authorities	1	<1%
EIR - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Regulation 12 (4) (a) - Information not held	2	1%
Regulation 12 (4) (d) - Drafts/incomplete/unfinished documents/data	1	<1%
Regulation 12 (5) (b) - the course of justice	1	<1%

- 4.20 The highest number of requests was received by Environment and Neighbourhoods Service who dealt with 488 cases, 35% of all received, and they responded to 92% on-time.

Service	No of Requests	% of Total Requests
Environment & Neighbourhoods	488	35%
Corporate & Customer Services	179	13%
Commissioning	129	9%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	97	7%
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	88	6%
Schools & Learning	69	5%
Corporate Governance	45	3%
Housing	39	3%
Strategy & Communications	38	3%
Finance	36	3%
Adult Social Services	35	3%
Public Health	31	2%
Children's Services - Early Help & Prevention	31	2%
Digital Services	26	2%
Regeneration & Economic Development	20	1%
Human Resources & Organisational Development	13	1%
Capital Projects and Property	11	1%
Customer Services & Libraries	4	<1%
Programme Delivery – Corporate Programme Management Office	3	<1%
Construction Related Project Delivery	2	<1%

## 5. Internal Reviews

- 5.1 If a customer is unhappy with the way their FOI/EIR request was handled, they can ask for an Internal Review.
- 5.2 A total of 43 reviews were conducted in 2019/2020, 3% of the 1384 requests received. 20% of the reviews were upheld.

Decision	Total	% of Total Reviews
Not upheld	29	67%
Partly upheld	3	7%
Upheld	11	26%

We responded to 84% of Internal Reviews within 20 days.

## 6. Information Commissioner

- 6.1 If, following an internal review, a customer remains dissatisfied with the response they can approach the office of the Information Commissioner (ICO) to ask them to review the decision.

- 6.2 During 2019/2020 a total of 6 formal enquiries were received from the ICO. In all of these cases the Commissioner found in our favour, with no action required from us.
- 6.3 Mid way through 2019 the ICO commenced the monitoring of all London Boroughs who were struggling to meet the 90% statutory requirement. Haringey implemented an action plan to improve the performance. By the end of December Haringey had achieved a performance of 89% which satisfied the ICO and they therefore released us from their monitoring.

## 7. Local Government Ombudsman Performance and Findings

### Summary

- 7.1 Every year the Local Government Ombudsman writes to all Local Authorities with details of the complaints that their office has received including information about the number of complaints and enquiries received, the decisions made, and compliance with recommendations during the period.
- 7.2 There is further information on the Ombudsman's website, which provides a comparison with other Local Authorities. Some key statistics are shown below:
- The Ombudsman registered a total of 17,019 in complaints and enquiries in 2019/20 compared to 16,899 in 2018/19
  - They carried out 4217 detailed investigations in 2019/20 compared to 4232 in 2018/19
  - The below graph explains the breakdown of the received service areas and percentage upheld for all councils

Service Name	Volume of detailed cases	Percentage upheld
Education & Children's Services	910	72%
Adult Care Services	986	68%
Housing	413	66%
Environment & Public Protection	456	64%
Benefits and Tax	282	65%
Highways & Transport	293	56%
Planning & Development	735	40%
Corporate & Other	142	42%
Total	4217	

- Of those detailed investigations they upheld 58% which is a slight increase from 57% in 2018/19

- They made 2039 recommendations to put things right on upheld cases for 2019/20
  - Haringey had a slight decrease in cases referred to the LGO in 2019/20 – 164 compared to 166 in 2018/19. The Ombudsman investigated 41 of these and upheld 33 of them, showing an upheld percentage of 80%. This compares to an average of 70% in similar councils. Last year 18/19 the cases investigated were 53 with 37 showing an upheld percentage of 70%. There may be fewer cases recorded for 19/20 due to Covid and the Ombudsman taking the stance to pause work, therefore the reduction in volumes should be considered lightly. Next year's report will reflect the impact to cases due to Covid.
8. The Ombudsman issued two reports against Haringey Council in 2019/20. One was related to our repeated failure to calculate a service users housing benefit correctly. The Council's miscalculations led to her being pressured to leave her rented property. We then failed to progress her homelessness application. When the service-user wanted to appeal the calculations, we failed to refer her to the tribunal.
- 8.1 In response to this finding the Ombudsman was pleased to note that the Council responded well and exceeded what was asked by completing a second audit of cases to ensure similar mistakes had not affect other service users. The council also approached the service users lost furniture claim generously, reimbursing the full amount sought and acknowledged the service failure in the case.
- 8.2 In the second case the investigation found the council was at fault in the action it took to pursue a business rate debt. The council decided to start bankruptcy proceedings to recover the debt but used inaccurate information when it decided the individual liable had sufficient realisable assets to cover the debt and any costs incurred. The Council also delayed in pursuing the debt. We were asked to apply to annul the bankruptcy proceedings and cover costs incurred. It was also recommended to make a payment for the distress caused. The Council initially indicated it would not comply with the recommendation that it apply to annul the bankruptcy proceedings. The LGO confirmed if we refused to do so, they would consider issuing a further report about the failure to comply. Subsequently, we reviewed the position and accepted the recommendations in full. They welcomed this change in view and was able to confirm satisfaction.
- 8.3 The Ombudsman was able to confirm satisfaction with our compliance with their recommendations in 95% of cases during the year. One case affected us achieving the 100% which was a SEN case where we did not provide everything on an EHCP plan nor did a review.
- 8.4 This year we have progressed the work with the Monitoring Officer regarding providing a report detailing investigations that found fault and we have a draft proposal which is currently being finalised. This remains a priority.
- 8.5 To raise the profile of Ombudsman cases we propose to send a monthly report to the AD's and Directors and to commence copying in AD's to correspondence to officers to provide oversight. Additionally we want to copy in Directors to the first enquiry from the Ombudsman to support when we get to the draft decision as this will link in with the new process with the Monitoring Officer

## Ombudsman Statistics

- 8.6 The following table shows the number of enquiries the ombudsman received in 2019/20 and the outcome. Categories of “advice given”, “incomplete/invalid”, and “referred back for local resolution” are all cases that did not involve the Ombudsman investigating the complaint. This equated to 80 cases and 49% of the total received.
- 8.7 Cases that are closed after initial enquiries do involve some investigation and input from the Council.
- 8.8 The upheld and not upheld cases are the ones that proceeded to a full investigation. Of the cases we dealt with, 33 were upheld representing 20% across all enquiries regarding Haringey received by the Ombudsman.

Outcomes 2019-2020	Number
Advice given	11
Incomplete / invalid	10
Not Upheld	8
Upheld	33
Referred to local resolution	59
Closed after initial enquiry	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>

- 8.9 Of the cases investigated, the Ombudsman upheld 33.

Remedy 2019-2020	No
Apology	1
Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	2
Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial redress: Loss of service, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Other Remedy	1
Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss, Provide services, Procedure or policy change/review	2
Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial redress: Loss of service. Provide training and/or guidance. Provide services	1
Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss., Procedure or policy change/review	1
Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Other Remedy	3
Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Provide training and/or guidance	1



Apology. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Reassessment	1
Apology. , Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Reassessment. , Other Remedy	1
Apology. Financial redress: Loss of service	1
Apology. Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Procedure or policy change/review	1
Apology. New appeal/review or reconsidered decision. Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	1
Apology. New appeal/review or reconsidered decision. Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	1
Apology. Provide training and/or guidance	1
Apology. Provide training and/or guidance. Procedure or policy change/review	1
Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	1
Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Other Remedy	1
Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble. Procedure or policy change/review. Apology	1
Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss. Other Remedy	1
Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss. Procedure or policy change/review	1
Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss. Provide training and/or guidance	1
Other Remedy	1
Procedure or policy change/review	2
Provide services	1
Provide services. Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss. Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	1
Null	5

8.10 These 33 cases have been broken down below: These cases have all been remedied.



## Adult Social Services - 6

These cases were:

- Delays in making care assessments and providing a suitable care package
- Review of timescales for financial assessments
- Review of policy
- Providing neighbouring boroughs copies of final decision statements

## Housing – 5

These cases were

- Ensuring processes are in; place for continuity of service when staff are absent from work and handling of section 202 reviews over the past 6 months to ensure decisions are being issued within statutory timescales
- Council to demonstrate how it is meeting the public sector equality duty when providing suitable accommodation to disabled housing applicants

## Highways & Transport – 3

These cases were

- Look to implement ways to manage the misuse of ESP's by its council officers until an amended traffic order comes into force

## Corporate & Other Services – 1

This case was

- The Council agreeing to review its complaints procedure and the need to consider exercising wider discretion to investigate late complaints. To also offer guidance about when the 12-month period starts.

## Children's Services - 6

These cases were

- Council legal duty to secure special educational provision and the need to hold reviews of EHCP plans annually
- Review the advice and information it provides to special guardians
- Reminder to allow extra time when sending letters near Christmas when organising meetings at short notice
- To provide training on the child in need procedure to include timescales, case actions and case recordings

## Revenues & Benefits – 9

These cases were

- Agreement to audit cases where it calculated overpayments and applied to two child restriction
- To correct mistakes and complete a further review of all cases
- Within one month tell the Ombudsman what actions it will take so that in future revenues officers properly consider the need for reasonable adjustment when dealing with the public

## Planning & Development – 2

These cases were

- The council to review its validation checklist to ensure it is clear when documents are required and when there is discretion

8.11 The table below shows Haringey's performance against our neighbouring boroughs

Authority Name	Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Total	Uphold Rate (%)	Average uphold rate (%) of similar authorities
London Borough of Barnet	12	3	64	60	13	32	184	71	70
London Borough of Camden	10	6	39	32	7	13	107	65	70
London Borough of Enfield	10	13	57	38	13	20	151	61	70
London Borough of Hackney	11	8	33	35	11	15	113	58	70
London Borough of Haringey	10	11	59	43	8	33	164	80	70
London Borough of Islington	4	6	30	21	7	17	85	71	70

#### Conclusion

We remain committed to thoroughly investigating, learning from, and acting as a result of individual complaints where it is found that standards have fallen below the level we expected and where services could be improved. We recognise what we do well and not so well, and we need to use this to improve the quality of life for our residents.

The Ombudsman's recommendations for the future are that we do not look at complaints in silos but that we really look at root causes of issues raised and that we look to remedy them for all. We are progressing the automation in the Respond system which will support the timeliness of completing cases whether this is Member Enquiries or complaints

We are planning detailed quality checking of stage one complaints to ensure that we have provided a quality response answering the complainants questions and ensuring remedies are acted on. Our aim is that this will mean getting it right first time resulting in less referrals to stage two and therefore prevent cases progressing onto the Ombudsman.

The Partnership Improvement Group mentioned in last years report was presented to Corporate Board and had agreement to proceed however due to the Covid pressures since March this has been delayed allowing the services to focus on our residents. This is something which will now be a priority, to address areas that we know we need to improve on. The group will use the data to identify areas for improvement as well as look at cross directional cases. There will be group discussions, learnings and knowledge shared and ownership of actions raised with a follow up to track progress.

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