Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Audit Committee

Wednesday 18 November 2026

Customer Feedback Reports for 2025-26

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington – Cabinet Member for Finance & Resident Services
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston – Director: Housing, Commercial and Customer Services
Service Area:	Customer Relationships and Welfare Services
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT - 16 June 2026 Business Briefing - 25 June 2026 Cabinet - 16 July 2026 Audit Committee – 18 November 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

The Committee is asked to:

1.1 Review the Customer Feedback Reports for 2025-26 in respect of Adult Statutory Complaints, Children's Statutory Complaints and Corporate Customer Feedback, and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter 2026.

1.2 Note the positive performance highlighted in this report, including the continued increase in positive feedback, reduction in the average time to respond to complaints, growth in mystery customer volunteers and being the first council in

the UK to receive ServiceMark accreditation from the Institute of Customer Services for customer service excellence.

1.3 Welcome the findings of this report and recognise the importance of robust open and transparent complaint handling and feedback processes that we have introduced for our residents.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 The Council through its existing Customer Strategy is committed to work collaboratively with our customers to develop quality services that are accessible to all. In April 2025, Telford & Wrekin became the first Council to be awarded the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) ServiceMark reflecting our performance and continued ambition to listen to our customers and to drive further improvement. The assessor confirmed that *'Telford & Wrekin Council's commitment to service excellence is evident in its strategic direction, the engagement and motivation of its workforce and the effectiveness of its day-to-day service delivery'*. This accreditation fulfils the ambition set out in our 2021 Customer Strategy titled 'Our journey to excellence by 2025' and provides a platform for continual improvement and has shaped our new Customer Strategy. The Customer Relationship team has also been shortlisted for LGC Small Team of the Year award, which has focused on the team's role in developing and achieving positive outcomes for our customers.

2.2 Our last ICS benchmarking demonstrated that we were performing extremely well when compared with both other public and private sector organisations in relation to overall satisfaction and customer experience, net promotor scoring, demonstrating that an increasing number of our customers are likely to promote our organisation to others and customer effort score, the effort our customers must make to access our services.

2.3 The purpose of this report is to update Audit Committee on the Council's customer feedback received between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, to provide assurance that the Council is actively listening and responding to the views of our customers, and that services are learning from complaints and wider customer feedback to continuously improve.

2.4 The last year has seen a continued increase in the number of compliments received from customers, with complaints representing a very small proportion –of the many thousands of interactions with customers each year. As an early adopter and pilot authority for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's new complaint handling code our speed of response has surpassed the forthcoming targets. We continue to offer multi-channel access, which is recognised by our customers.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Council has a well-established process for customers to tell us when things have gone well, and they have received an excellent service or when they need to raise concerns regarding the service they have received.

3.2 Our customers can also raise issues directly with the Council's Leader, Cabinet and Ward Members via our Cabinet and Member Enquiry processes, and via their local MP.

3.3 Our new Customer Strategy, which was launched in September 2025, reaffirms our commitment to putting residents at the heart of everything we do, while embracing new technologies. The strategy also expands our customer focus including the importance of feedback from children and young people, particularly when shaping the borough's future. We have also started to seek views beyond our residents including local businesses, visitors, and users of commercial services, recognising their vital role in the Borough's vibrancy and resilience.

3.4 As part of our established Customer Insight Programme, we have recruited Mystery Customers who help us to review our services from the customers' perspective, providing valuable feedback that allows our services to continually improve.

3.5 Compliments and positive feedback are shared across the Council and within teams, to inspire, motivate and build confidence and ensure that examples of best practice are used to help develop services.

3.6 To demonstrate a robust approach to responding to customer feedback and complaint handling, the Council produces an annual report on complaint handling for Children's Statutory Complaints, Adult's Statutory Complaints and Corporate Feedback. These reports can be found at Appendices A, B and C.

3.7 Our residents are continuing to experience the impact of ongoing cost of living pressures including increasing food and fuel prices. This is impacting upon almost every aspect of our residents' lives, including their health and wellbeing, their housing options and family life. In addition, the boroughs population is growing and aging which his resulting in the Council continuing to see significant demand, rising expectations and increased pressure on all its services.

3.8 In 2024/25 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman published their new complaint handling code. While not due to be formally monitored until 2026/27 Telford and Wrekin Council became early adopters of the code in May 2024 and have been working with the Ombudsman as part of a pilot of a small group of unitary authorities to assist in the development of guidance for Council's when using the code.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 Corporate Feedback Report (Appendix A)

4.1.1 The Highlights for 2025/26 are as follows;



4.1.2 The Corporate Feedback Report shows that there has been a sustained increase in compliments. The Council has seen a 182% increase in compliments in the last 7 years – 24% increase in the last year.

4.1.3 The Customer Insight Programme now has 256 volunteers registered as Mystery Customers and undertaking assignments to help us shape and improve our services. We have seen a 9% increase in volunteers during 2025/26.

4.1.4 During 2025/26 the Customer Insight Programme completed a number of reviews of different elements of the customer experience focussing particularly on the Live Well Telford Customer Experience and reviews of the Council's webpage. This has led to improvement in Live Well Telford's homepage navigation and an audit of dormant pages. During the year 36 Customer Insight Assignments were completed with an overall 82% satisfaction with the experience across the assignments completed.

4.1.5 Feedback from customers in relation to our Corporate Contact Centre indicates that performance is excellent. Customer satisfaction on our contact centre telephone calls was 96%, an increase on 95% in 2024/25.

4.1.6 There continues to be a range of ways that our customers can provide feedback e.g. QR Code Surveys, automated telephone surveys at the end of calls, Mystery Customer programme and other mechanisms such as the Making It Real Board.

Any improvements made are included on our 'You said, We did' webpage, which can be found here You said, We did and You Said, We Did - SEND - Local offer

4.1.7 In 2025/26 a total of 919 complaints were received across the Council, including statutory complaints, from 857 complainants. This is an incredibly small proportion, less than 1%, of the many thousands of transactions and interactions that take place across the organisation every year.

4.1.8 839 of the complaints were corporate complaints, an increase on the 710 that were received in 2024/25. The remaining complaints were children's and adult's statutory complaints (see Section 4.2 and 4.3). The increase in complaints mirrors the picture nationally where complaints are continuing to increase across both the public and private sector. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are also reporting an increase in cases. Telford and Wrekin Council is also committed to ensuring that its complaints procedures are easily accessible and the number of complaints received may also be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints procedure. Local Authorities are now working to a single complaint handling code which over time will allow for additional benchmarking across councils. The increase in both compliments and complaints suggest that customers are effectively accessing our feedback processes. We welcome this additional feedback as a key mechanism to improve our services, and so we are encouraged that more people feel able to give their views.

4.1.9 During the year, at the first stage of the complaints process, 24 complaints were not accepted because they were more appropriately addressed via an appeal or tribunal or via court proceedings or included insurance or employment matters. All cases were provided with the details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. 91 complaints were received which were for other organisations. These were appropriately signposted.

4.1.10 In 2025/26, 69% of corporate complaints were received via a digital access channel. While a small reduction on 2024/25 this is still the preferred way for customers to make complaints. The number of customers raising a complaint via telephone has increased this year to 30% of corporate complaints received, indicating the importance of continuing to provide an omnichannel service.

4.1.11 Despite the increase in the number of complaints received the percentage of upheld complaints has remained in line with the previous year with 57% not upheld and 3% were either withdrawn or resolved by the service before the complaint was processed. We encourage our officers to look at complaints holistically and if there is any element of the complaint where we could have done better, the complaint is upheld, even if this is a relatively minor aspect of the complaint. We encourage our teams to be open to acknowledging where things could be improved, and therefore our key focus with the percentage of complaints upheld is monitoring trends overtime. It is positive to see a relatively stable position with no sudden swings up or down. Our other key principle is to ensure that we have embraced the learning from all complaints received to ensure that long term sustainable improvements to services are implemented.

4.1.12 All complaints upheld have been reviewed and shared to ensure wider learning to avoid such issues occurring in the future and to ensure that there is continuous improvement and adoption of change. Our focus for 26/27 will be to communicate across the organisation the importance of delivering clear, customer-centred messaging, strengthening expectation management, effective handovers, strong case ownership, timely responses, and proactive escalation and improving consistency across all interactions. The report details actions that will be taken in 2026/27 to improve these reoccurring themes.

4.1.13 During 2025/26 the Council has improved further on response timescales with corporate complaints responded to in an average of 7 days well within the timescale of 10 working days set by the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

4.1.14 In 2025/26 90% of corporate complaints were responded to within 10 working days, this is a significant improvement on the 84% achieved in 2024/25. Only 2 complaints were responded to outside of the 20-working day maximum timescale, however they were unusually complex cases and were both sent within 22 working days.

4.1.15 16% of the corporate complaints received escalated to stage two of the procedure. In terms of numbers this equates to 131 stage two complaints and is a 44% increase on the 91 that progressed in 2024/25. Of the 125 completed in year, 22% were upheld, 7 cases remained outstanding on 31 March 2026, these are still within timescale for a response.

4.1.16 Examples of positive improvements resulting from learning following complaints can be seen at page 30 of the Corporate Feedback Report (Appendix A).

4.1.17 As well as compliments and complaints, the Customer Relationship Team manages the Leader and Cabinet enquiry process, Member enquiry process and MP enquiries. During 2025/26 a total of 754 Leader and Cabinet enquiries were received. A proportion of these enquiries were responded to as urgent enquiries with tight timescale of 2 working days. However, 90% of responses were provided within the target timescales and this is in line with performance targets.

4.1.18 During 2025/26 528 MP enquiries were received, a 109% increase on the previous year. We aim to respond within 10 working days; the average response time was 8 working days. 85% were responded to in timescale which is very close to the 90% target despite the significant increase.

4.1.19 Under Telford and Wrekin Council's Registered Housing Provider status we own/manage 226 properties. 9 complaints were received from tenants in these properties during 2025/26. All complaints were responded to in accordance with the statutory code and timescales outlined by the Housing Ombudsman Service and one case is currently being reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

4.1.20 From May 2024 the Policy and procedure for reporting complaints involving Child Sexual Exploitation was combined into one corporate complaint procedure. We have produced a reference document on 'How we respond to complaints involving

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)' which can be found here Complaints procedures - Telford & Wrekin Council. During 2025/26 no complaints were received which involved Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). A separate report "The Annual CSE Report" outlining the work that has been done around CSE and the Councils ongoing commitment to tackling the issue, was reported to Full Council on 16 July 2026.

4.2 Adult Statutory Complaint and Feedback Report (Appendix B)

4.2.1 We received 53 Adult Statutory complaints in 2025/26, a decrease on the 57 received in 2024/25. A further 12 complaints were resolved under the 24-hour resolution process and were therefore not registered under the statutory procedure, in accordance with legislation. Overall, the number of dissatisfactions raised has reduced to 65 compared to the 81 in 2024/25.

4.2.2 To provide some context, Adult Social Services have received 7,921 contacts from new people in the year, and 2,139 people are receiving long term services.

4.2.3 In 2025/26, 79% of Adult Statutory Complaints were received via a digital access channel in line with 2024/25. We continue to ensure that customers can raise concerns via traditional access channels as well as digital.

4.2.4 Of the complaints responded to in the year, 43% (24) were upheld – a slight reduction on the 44% upheld in 2024/25.

4.2.5 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) regulations 2009 set a benchmark for all Adult Statutory Complaints to be investigated within six months. When an Adult statutory complaint is received, we negotiate a timescale with the complainants. Depending on the complexity of the case this is typically 35 working days. We aim to respond to all Adult Statutory Complaints within a maximum of 65 working days. In 2025/26 the average number of days to respond was 25 working days a slight increase on the 24 working days achieved in 2024/25. No cases exceeded 65 working days during the year.

4.2.6 Examples of positive improvements resulting from learning following complaints can be seen from page 11 of the Adult Statutory Complaint Report (Appendix B).

4.2.7 Our Adult Social Care service is committed to achieving improved outcomes through continuous learning and improvement. A key area of quality assurance is using feedback from people who use our services and their carers and families' to understand experiences and shape improvements, demonstrating a commitment to learning from all feedback, regardless of source, format or process. This feedback informs a number of developments, examples of these developments can be found from page 14 of the Adult Statutory Complaint Report (Appendix B).

4.2.8 During 2024, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessed Telford & Wrekin Council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act Part 1. Telford & Wrekin Council's Adult Social Care Services as 'Good', recognising that the services are performing well and meeting their expectations. Their assessment highlighted that: "*Innovative approaches to coproduction, engagement, and*

inclusion, were embedded in local authority processes. These were supported by the strategic board structures and staff culture." and that there is "*Strong leadership and a culture of transparency and learning*."

4.2.9 Quality assurance reports are prepared, shared and discussed at the ASC Quality Assurance Delivery Group and subsequently at the ASC Assurance Board. These include a quarterly report on 'Feedback from people who use our services, their carers and families' that includes issues, areas for reflection and improvement and learning outcomes.

4.3 Children's Statutory Complaint and Feedback Report (Appendix C)

4.3.1 We received 22 Children's statutory complaints in 2025/26, a decrease on the 23 received in 2024/25. Four cases progressed to an independent Stage 2 investigation during the year. No Stage 3 panels were completed in 2025/26.

4.3.2 To provide some context, Children's Safeguarding and Family Support received a total of 6,670 contacts during the year, this includes telephone calls and emails and had 900 referrals into the service completed during the year.

4.3.3 Of the 22 complaints received 6 were received directly from children and young people.

4.3.4 In 2025/26, 82% of Children's Statutory Complaints were received via a digital access channel, including via our online complaint web form and by email directly to the Customer Relationship team.

4.3.5 Of the complaints completed in the year, 54% (13) of the complaints were upheld.

4.3.6 The average number of days to respond to Children's Statutory Complaints during the year was 13 working days, an improvement on the 14 working days achieved in 2024/25.

4.3.7 At stage 2, two complaints were upheld, and one not upheld, with one which was still subject to investigation on 31 March 2026.

4.3.8 Examples of positive improvements resulting from learning following complaints can be seen from page 10 of the Children's Statutory Complaint Report (Appendix C).

4.3.9 Our Children's Safeguarding and Family Support Service is committed to continuous learning and improvement using feedback from customers who use our services, such as parents, carers, professionals, colleagues, children and young people and their families.

4.3.10 The service has also introduced a Voice of the Child Team, which includes four young people with lived experience who are completing apprenticeships with the Council. Their goal is to drive positive change by making sure young people's voices are truly heard. They have launched youth forums and delivered participation events, which are all designed to support a range of initiatives to

extend engagement with children and young people to connect, uplift and empower. The report expands the feedback from customers through this work, highlighting some feedback provided and the actions taken as a result, this can be found at page 13 of the Children's Statutory Complaint Report (Appendix C).

4.3.11 During 2024 children's services were inspected by Ofsted. The HMI Inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of Telford & Wrekin's Children's Services as 'Outstanding'. The Lead Inspector commented that '*Children and families in Telford and Wrekin continue to experience exceptional social work practice when they are in care and as care leavers.*' They went on to say *'Participation is a real strength and children's and families' involvement is threaded throughout service developments.'*

4.3.12 Feedback from customers about their experiences of children's social care provisions is monitored in accordance with our Quality Assurance Framework. A monthly Quality Assurance meeting is held to discuss issues identified, areas for reflection and improvement and learning outcomes from feedback. All of this ensures that we continue to 'close the loop' to ensure that learning from Quality Assurance is used in a meaningful way. Actions informed by this feedback can be found at page 13 of Appendix C.

4.4 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2026 (Appendix D)

4.4.1 During 2025/26 a total of 58 new enquiries were escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, one remained outstanding from the year before and a decision was received in the year. The Ombudsman has not yet determined on 31 cases escalated to them up to 31 March 2026. The authority has only been made aware of the detail relating to 12 of the outstanding complaints of which 9 are corporate and three are Adult Statutory complaints.

4.4.2 During the year, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman made the decision that they were not going to investigate 29 of the enquiries. However, they did complete four detailed investigations. The Ombudsman upheld four detailed investigations, however in one of these cases they confirmed that the Council had already remedied the case before it reached them. The Ombudsman has confirmed the Council has complied with 100% of the recommendations made during the year.

4.4.3 In all cases where complaints were upheld the Council has apologised to customers and has taken learning forward to improve practices.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 Failure to robustly manage and monitor customer feedback and complaints would not accord with duties placed on Local Authorities and would undermine the Council's ability to deliver continuous improvement in services that meet resident's needs.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 Ineffective handling of complaints and management of the complaints procedures may result in reputational damage and financial costs to the Council.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 A community- focussed, innovative Council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

Key outcome: Our customer experience is the best possible and facilities are accessible to all.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The cost of dealing with complaints is mainly in the form of officer time and is therefore met from existing Council budgets within Customer Services. If a complaint is upheld, additional costs may be incurred for those that are requested by the Ombudsman and include a financial remedy. These costs would also be met by existing council budgets within this respective service area.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. It should be noted, however, that under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, there are some complaints involving Children's Services and Family Safeguarding which must follow the procedure contained within the Regulations. Where a complaint is made which is of a type that should be dealt with under the Regulations, the Council is required to ensure that this occurs.

9.2 Complaints about Adult Social Care Services are governed by The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and guidance: Listening, responding, improving: a guide to better customer care.

9.3 The policies to which the Council works in respect of customer feedback and complaints is in line with the latest guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service.

9.4 The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 Not applicable

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 Some complaints relate to Social Care; there are strong links into the local health and care system.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 All our complaints policies provide an opportunity for residents to raise any concerns around inequality. Our policies take account of our customers communication accessibility needs.

12.2 The policies specifically meet the aims of the public sector equality duty; eliminate unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations, for people who share protected characteristics. To ensure that we continue to meet this enduring duty we collect data on a regular basis on complainants and report on the protected characteristics of complainants and nature of any discrimination or inequality.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 Not applicable

14.0 Background Papers

1 You said, We did webpage.
2 'How we respond to complaints involving Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)'- Complaints procedures - Telford & Wrekin Council
3 The Tenant Satisfaction and Complaints Report 2025-26 Complaints and compliments annual reports - Telford & Wrekin Council

15.0 Appendices

A Corporate Feedback Report 2025-26
B Adult Statutory Complaint and Feedback Report 2025-26
C Children's Statutory Complaint and Feedback Report 2025-26
D Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter 2026 link to Telford & Wrekin Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	09/11/2026	09/11/2026	KK
Legal	04/06/2026/ 17/06/2026/ 25/06/2026	12/06/2026/ 18/06/2026 02/07/2026/ 15/10/2026	SH DTW
Finance	04/06/2026/ 17/06/2026/ 25/06/2026	12/06/2026/ 18/06/2026/ 02/07/2026/ 21/10/2026	TD