

Appendix 5 - Joint Audit and Governance Committee response

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council are committed to placing residents at the heart of everything we do. We strive to deliver a high standard of service and recognise that, on occasion, we may not achieve this at the first opportunity. Feedback from our residents—whether compliments, comments, or complaints—is essential to our continuous improvement. We actively encourage customers to share their concerns as this enables us to address issues promptly and learn from the experience to enhance our services in the future.

We welcome complaints from all residents and tenants and are committed to managing them in an independent, fair, and transparent manner. Our complaints process is designed to be accessible to everyone, and we make reasonable adjustments to ensure that no individual is disadvantaged when submitting a complaint.

As the governing body with oversight of complaints, we receive annual reports detailing the councils' overall performance in complaints handling, including those received in our capacity as landlord. In this year's report, it is noted that no complaints were received relating to the councils' role as landlord. This may reflect the limited size of the councils' housing stock and the proactive processes in place within the Housing team to resolve issues for tenants at an early stage.

We welcome the councils' consistent and thorough approach to complaint management and are assured that the appropriate policies, procedures, and practices are in place. We also welcome improvements in the level of reporting available to the Committee as part of this report; and note changes to our Complaints policy following Housing Ombudsman feedback. The Committee has reviewed the Landlord annual self-assessment on complaints and considers it to provide an accurate reflection of the current position based on available evidence.

We are satisfied that both the Corporate Complaints and Housing teams have the necessary resourcing to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Codes of Practice, as well as the councils' own complaint-handling policies.