



Title of Report:	Development of a Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP)
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 October 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with strategic partners to deliver our vision for this Council area
Lead Officer	Democratic and Central Services Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 NIPSO ran a public consultation on complaints handling from 10 June 2022 to 30 September 2022. As part of the consultation, comments were sought on NIPSO's proposal on a staged approach to implementation across the public sector, to take account of the unique set of circumstances in each sector and to build capacity and support for the new approach.
- 1.2 The first sector NIPSO will work with in developing a Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) will be the Local Government sector. NIPSO will also commence scoping work with the Health and Social Care sector.

2.0 Next Steps

- 2.1 NIPSO has put in place an appropriate framework and processes for the development of the MCHP. For this purpose, two networks have been established: a strategic network and an operational network.
- 2.2 The strategic network is made up of senior leaders within the Local Government sector e.g. Local Government Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), representatives from NILGA, Advice NI and NICVA as well as the Ombudsman and Acting Deputy Ombudsman. NIPSO will oversee the development of the MCHP. It is envisaged that the strategic network will meet three times during the development process of the MCHP:
 1. At the beginning of the process, to agree Terms of Reference;
 2. Mid-way through the process to ensure appropriate progression; and
 3. At the end of the process to sign-off and approve the MCHP.
- 2.3 The operational network will be made up of senior staff at director/head of service level from each Local Government organisation. The person should have a depth of knowledge and sufficient seniority to make decisions and influence change with regard to complaints handling within your organisation. The nominated officer for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is the Democratic and Central Services Manager. The operational network will be the main network for the development process and will meet regularly. The first meeting was held on 7th September 2022.
- 2.4 The role of the Operational Network will be to work collaboratively with other network members, including NIPSO's Complaints Standards Team (CST), to develop any Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) to be published by NIPSO for implementation by the Local Government public bodies in Northern Ireland (NI). The LG operational network sets out to:
 - Develop a simplified and standardised complaints procedure to be used across the NI Local Government sector
 - Work collaboratively with other Operational Network members and NIPSO's CST to develop a MCHP and supporting documentation

- Commit to and implement any MCHP published by NIPSO under Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

2.5 The Operational Network will operate from 7 September 2022 until the date a MCHP has been: developed and agreed by the Local Government Operational Network; agreed and signed-off by the Local Government Strategic Network; and published by NIPSO. The target date for publication of the MCHP is Spring 2023.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Council notes the content of the report regarding the progress of the development of a Model Complaints Handling Procedure for the Local Government Sector.