

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2026

Present:-

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)
Cllr. Neil Wright (Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)

Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Luke Cousin
Cllr. Roy Denney

Cllr. Susan Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey
Cllr. Antony Moseley

Cllr. Tracey Shepherd
Cllr. Maggie Wright

Officers present:-

Luke Clements	- Business Systems & Information Manager
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Sophie Wisher	- Senior Elections & Governance Officer
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Royston Bayliss, Cllr. Stuart Coar and Cllr. Matt Tomeo

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2025 as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2025

Considered – report of the Business Systems & Information Manager.

The following key points were made by the Officer during their presentation:

- Prior to a formal complaint process, the Council will aim to resolve any issues to an individual's satisfaction before they become a complaint if they can be dealt with quickly and efficiently by the relevant service area, known as 'Informal Service Level Complaints'. These issues are not recorded or monitored by the Council's Information Governance team.
- In February 2024, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) published a Complaint Handling Code for Council's. Although the LGSCO consider the code to be 'best practice' and 'important advice and guidance' it is not a statutory requirement for Councils to adhere to.
- When reviewing the 'Complaints Code' after its publication, Blaby District Council found that the current Policy and procedures already met most of the advice and recommendations outlined in the code. However, the Council has identified some ways in which it can improve and comply further with the LGSCO Complaints Code.
- Categorisation of complaints:
 - Service Level / Stage 0 Complaint (typically sent directly to service areas and not formally recorded or monitored).
 - Formal Stage 1 Complaint.
 - Formal Stage 2 Complaint (an escalation from Stage 1).
 - An Ombudsman Investigated Complaint (typically escalated from a Stage 2 complaint).
- Complaint Volumes – Stage 1 and Stage 2 (2025 calendar year)
 - 109 stage 1 complaints were recorded.
 - 22 complaints were escalated to Stage 2.
- Formal complaint volumes by service area, the top 3 being:
 - Refuse, Recycling and District Cleansing
 - Council Tax and Benefits
 - Planning and Development
- Formal complaint outcomes – where upon the investigation of a formal complaint and as part of the final response, the responding officer is required to state one of the following outcomes:
 - Complaint Upheld – Where the Council take full responsibility for service failures outlined by the complainant.
 - Complaint Partly Upheld - Where the Council takes partial responsibility for service failures outlined by the complainant.
 - Complaint Not Upheld – Where the Council does not accept responsibility for service failures outlined by the complainant.

- It was noted that in 2025, 63 complaints were not upheld, 37 were partly upheld and 27 complaints were upheld.
- The type or nature of complaints received can vary significantly. However, to enable improved analysis and improvement, the Council groups complaints into 7 categories:
 - Failure to provide a service at the level or standard agreed.
 - Neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for service.
 - Unhelpful attitude of a Council employee.
 - Failure to follow Council Policy or Procedure.
 - Failure to consider relevant issues when making a decision.
 - Data Protection Issues.
 - Other
- The top three complaints were categorised as:
 - Failure to provide a service at the level or standard agreed.
 - Other
 - Neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for service.
- Complaints handled by LGSCO – 1 complaint had been investigated and upheld.
- Lessons Learnt - Upon completion of a formal complaint response, the responding officer is asked to complete a monitoring form to confirm the outcome, categorise the complaint nature, and state any lessons learnt arising from their investigations. This is particularly relevant if the complaint outcome is fully or partly upheld. 69% of fully or partly upheld complaints (stage 1 and 2) identified that lessons that have been learnt. Selected examples were provided.
- Improvement and Development
 - Improved compliance with LGSCO Complaints Code
 - Ensuring annual complaints data and reports are published and available for Scrutiny review each year.
 - Procedural review to exclude stage 0 complaints from the complaints policy and re-categorise these as service requests.
 - Adopting the Complaints Code definition of a complaint and a service request within our Policy.
 - A more robust process for capturing and implementing lessons learnt from upheld and partially upheld complaints.
 - Improved internal complaints process and support
 - Response templates to guide effective complaint responses at each stage.
 - An updated and more detailed complaints procedure for employees.

- Supportive training resources for complaint responders.

Members raised queries on the following:

- The data on the number of complaints responded to within the 15-day deadline.
- Members requested that a breakdown of upheld vs partially upheld complaints be broken down into service area to allow scrutiny to review areas of concern.
- Officer time taken in dealing with complaints, the officer responded that this data is not currently collected.
- That only 2 years' worth of data had been provided, and it would be useful to see any trends over a period of 5 years.
- No data is held from stage 0 to stage 1 – has there been any learning from these? The officer responded that many of these complaints are dealt with quickly, e.g. missed bins. More serious complaints would be referred to Stage 1 with the Service Manager or member of SLT to consider.
- It was noted that complaints that Councillors receive may not be recorded in the system. It was suggested that the complaint form be circulated to Members so they could record their complaints too.
- Support for residents who don't have access to the online complaint form, ensuring equal opportunity. The officer responded that not only can complaints be made online, they can also be made over the telephone and in person.
- Lessons learnt – Members suggested that this may need to be reviewed to avoid teams 'marking their own homework'. The Officer added that SLT can also view the dashboard and action and concerning trends.
- Members discussed whether the number of complaints vs %age of population put the council in a favourable position.
- If the Council offers monetary compensation as a complaint resolution. The officer responded that this is only offered if the complaint is investigated by the ombudsman and they deem a monetary value to be the recommended resolution.
- Serial complainers – Members noted there was a vexatious and unreasonable behaviour policy to support officers with these types of complaints.
- Compliments – Members noted there were inconsistencies in how these were recorded and the LGSCO is silent on these.
- Members noted that recommendations listed in the recent internal audit review and the improvements officers had initiated. The officer also added that improvements were ongoing.

DECISIONS

1. That the Scrutiny Commissioners consider any further actions at their meeting on 23 February 2026.
2. That the complaints report and data provided be noted.

Reasons:

1. Commissioners wished to further examine the data presented before them, notably how the complaints are recorded, initial reporting and trends.
2. It is of value and importance that the Councils Scrutiny Commission has assurance of the organisation's formal complaint handling performance and the opportunity to comment and review this due to their commitment to ensuring better outcomes for our communities.

4. **SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS DRAFT 2026/27 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

Considered – report of the Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer.

DECISION

That Statement on the Administrations 2026-27 Draft Budget Proposals report for submission to Cabinet Executive on 23 February 2026 be approved.

Reason:

Scrutiny Commission has a mandate to scrutinise the Administration's draft budget proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet which it is obliged to consider before making final recommendations on the Budget to Council.

5. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Members accepted the 25/26 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer provided the following update and encouraged all Members to attend a session:

- 10 March – Review of Member Champions
- 25 March - HR Phase 2

6. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

7. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no further actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.40 P.M.