

## **MEMBERS ENQUIRIES (ME)**

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### **REASON FOR ITEM**

To be provided with a presentation on enquiries which are submitted to officers on behalf of residents to Elected Members for information.

### **OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE**

- 1. To question officers on the Members Enquiries process**
- 2. Members are asked to seek clarification on the procedure if required and to consider any suggestions to improve the process for both residents and Members.**

### **BACKGROUND**

1. The Head of Performance and Improvement and the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager (Administration) will provide Members with a short presentation on the procedure for Members Enquiries and Members are asked to seek clarification on the procedure if required and to consider any suggestions to improve the process for both residents and Members.

### **What is a Members Enquiry?**

2. A Members Enquiry can be a request for information, the clarification of circumstances or further information for a particular situation or constituent, or the notification of dissatisfaction with a service.
3. A Members enquiry can be made either by telephone, e-mail, in person, by letter/memo, or Fax, with all methods having equal status with regard to the procedure for a response.

### **MEMBERS ENQUIRIES - PROCEDURE**

4. On receipt of an enquiry from a Councillor or MP it will be logged by the Residents Services ME/FOI Team onto the Onyx system, where it will be allocated a ME reference number. In the main, on the 1<sup>st</sup> working day, and by no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> working day from receipt the following procedure is followed:-
  - An acknowledgment email will be sent from the Social Care & Housing Members Mailbox to:  
The Member - Councillor/MP confirming the ME reference and the service area the ME has been allocated to.
  - The acknowledgement email and original enquiry will be forwarded to the appropriate \*Assistant Director/Head of Service. This will advise of the deadline and any other information.

- On receipt of this email, the Assistant Director/Head of Service will allocate the ME by forwarding the email to the appropriate Officer, with cc to the SCH Members Mailbox.
5. By no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> working day from receipt of Councillor/MP enquiry the allocated officer will send a draft response for approval to their Assistant Director/Head of Service. If this deadline cannot be met an email is sent to advise why there will be a delay.
  6. By no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> working day from receipt of Councillor/MP enquiry, the Assistant Director/Head of Service or appropriate PA, will send the final response to the Councillor/MP, with cc to Social Care & Housing Members Mailbox and the allocated officer. If the 10 working day deadline cannot be met a holding response must be sent out as soon as possible.

## STATISTICS

7. The table below provides the Committee with statistics of MEs received across the Council's service areas for 2012/2013/14

<b>SERVICE AREAS</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Housing Service	862	1,134
Housing Benefit	79	105
Council Tax	55	88
Education Services	44	39
Residents Services	4,591	5,444
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,631</b>	<b>6,810</b>

## ANALYSIS

8. The number of MEs increased by 21% (1,179) when comparing 2012/13 figure of 5,631 with the figure for 2013/14 of 6,810.
9. Housing Service Members Enquiries were mainly about the following;-
  - Allocation of housing accounted for 427 MEs in 2012/13 and 504 MEs in 2013/14.
  - Repairs service accounted for 161 MEs in 2012/13 and 228 MEs in 2013/14.

- Community housing services accounted for 164 MEs in 2012/13 and 144 in 2013/14.

10. Residents Services Members enquiries were mainly about:

- Anti social behaviour accounted for 1,245 MEs in 2012/13 and 1,363 in 2013/14.
- Litter on the street/pavement accounted for 450 MEs in 2012/13 and 621 in 2013/14.
- Planning and development control accounted for 498 MEs in 2012/13 and 478 in 2013/14.
- Potholes and re surfacing accounted for 290 MEs in 2012/13 and 292 in 2013/14
- An area of increase is Tree Maintenance which has risen from 133 in 2012/13 to 205 in 2013/14.