

### **S36. Scrutiny Panel Conclusions & Recommendations: Complaints Handling**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services setting out the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel established to review complaints handling within the Council. Appended to the report were the findings of the panel, Falkirk Council's Annual Complaints Report 2015/16, and Service submissions considered by the panel. Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report.

The committee discussed that there would be a statistical increase in the number of complaints received by the Council if the recommendation to change how requests for service were recorded, e.g. missed bins, was adopted by the Executive.

Members requested that it was made explicit that the Council considered complaints to be a key part of the performance and improvement framework and that learning from complaints was used to make a difference to practice.

The committee discussed instances of vexatious complainers and sought clarity on the Council's policy position. Fiona Campbell advised that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) did not use the term vexatious but that the Council's policy reflected what was in the SPSO's policy on unacceptable levels of contact.

Following a discussion on elected members' lone working, particularly relating to home visits, the committee requested that information on the Council's lone working policy was included in the Member's Handbook which was being developed for issue after the local government elections in May.

#### **Decision**

##### **The committee:-**

- (1) noted the work and findings of the panel, and**
- (2) agreed to refer the panel's conclusions and recommendations to the Executive for approval on the basis that complaints should be seen as part of the wider performance and improvement framework.**