Report on	Complaints Handling Arrangements Annual Report
Date of Meeting	5th June 2025
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Assistant Director Org. Development, Strategy & Performance
Contact Officer	Arlene McIlwrath, Customer Experience Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To provide Members with an update on data capture and investigation arrangements in relation to the Councils complaints handling procedures for the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025.
1.2	Under The Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016 statutory legislation, Council is required to record, monitor and investigate complaints in line with procedures and has a duty to publish complaints data on a quarterly, six monthly and annual basis.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The procedures which came into effect on 1st January 2024 have provided a standardised process for how complaints are administered across local government. It places a statutory duty on Councils to receive, record and monitor complaints in line with guidance, reporting and subsequent publication of the data. The procedures also promote a culture of learning from complaints.
2.2	Council was mandated to develop its own procedures and operational processes for the administration of complaints data. Significant development work has taken place in relation internal and external facing guidance, online forms, and raising awareness to help embed the new procedures across the organisation. The Council has been subject to regulatory audit and compliance checks by NIPSO to ensure Council is meeting its obligations under the legislative requirements.
2.3	Responsibility for the development, implementation and ongoing management of complaints is a function of the Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance Directorate (Customer Services section).
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Council's Complaints Handling Procedures involves a two-stage process, as summarised below. Further information on our complaints handling arrangements

	and our Complaints Handling Procedure is accessible from our website by clicking through to: Mid Ulster District Council Complaints Handling Procedure **Stage One – Frontline Response** • Aims to respond to complainants within 5 working days **Stage Two – Investigation** • Provides a more in-depth investigation with an acknowledgement within 3 working days and full response to be provided within 20 working days
3.2	A majority of the cases will be dealt with at Stage One, however, if customers remain dissatisfied, they can escalate to Stage Two. Should complainants remain dissatisfied after Stage Two and, they have exhausted the Council's procedures, they may refer the matter to the Ombudsman for investigation.
3.3	For the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, the Council received 69 Stage 1 complaints of which 11 were escalated to Stage 2. In addition, the Council also received 22 service requests (not deemed complaints) and 23 enquiries which were signposted to other relevant statutory agencies. Specific details of the complaint categorisation and complaint outcomes is contained within the full annual report, attached as Appendix One.
3.4	Council Officers will continue to engage with the NIPSO Best Practice Network, a collective of local government stakeholders including Councils, NILGOSC, Staff Commission etc to share knowledge and best practice on complaints handling processes. The Council will also consider the development of appropriate systems and processes to track and investigate complaints, with timely and appropriate data shared with relevant service areas.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
4.1	Human: Officer time to manage and monitor ongoing complaints.
4.2	Financial: Integration of data within an appropriate management system to capture and record complaints data to meet statutory requirements.
4.3	Risk Management: Ongoing compliance with statutory requirements of CHP under the Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016.
5.0	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable, determined as not being required at this time.

	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable, determined as not being required at this time
6.0	**Recommendation(s)**
6.1	That Members note the contents of this annual statistical report for 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025; the associated Appendix and confirm its agreement to publish the data as required by legislation.
7.0	**Documents Attached & References**
7.1	Appendix One – Annual Complaints Handling Data 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025.