

Meeting of the Cabinet – 18th September, 2013

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2012/13

Purpose of Report

1. To note the Annual Review Letter for 2012/13 from the Local Government Ombudsman and information in respect of complaints received against this Council and dealt with by the Ombudsman's office over the year ending 31st March, 2013.

Background

2. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a copy of the Annual Review Letter of the Local Government Ombudsman for the year ended 31st March 2013.

For the reasons outlined in the report the Local Government Ombudsman has only presented the total number of complaints received, 25, about the Council.

3. Based on information held by the Council, the following data can however be given:-
 - The number of complaints received in 2012/13 – 25 – has reduced from the 37 received in 2011/12.
 - Of the complaints received, 7 were in respect of housing, (from 1st April, 2013, the Housing Ombudsman Service will also deal with some types of housing complaint), 7 in respect of various Directorate of the Urban Environment activities, for example pest control, allotments, trees and highways, 4 related to school appeals heard by Independent Appeals Panels, 4 in respect of adult social care, 2 in respect of planning matters and 1 in respect of a licensing matter.
 - In respect of the complaints determined in the year to 31st March, 2013, no formal reports finding maladministration causing injustice were issued.

- There was only 1 case, relating to an adult social care matter, that involved the payment of compensation in the sum of £1,500.
- The timescale for responding to complaints, 28 days, continues to be met.

Finance

4. There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report. Any compensation determined, arising from an investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman, is met from existing Directorate budgets.

Law

5. The Commission for Local Administration was created under Parts I and 3 of the Local Government Act 1974.

Equality Impact

6. This report accords with the Council's Equality Policy. The role of the Ombudsman affords a system of complaint and redress to members of the public who feel they have been subject to maladministration by the Council. Some of the complaints made concern children and young people and so, dependent on the remedy proposed, if any, there may have been either a direct or indirect impact on them.

Recommendations

7. That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted be noted and that the Chief Executive and Directors be requested to:-
 - (a) Review their internal arrangements, as appropriate; and
 - (b) Continue to ensure that requests for information on complaints received are dealt with by the date requested. This will ensure that responses can be submitted to the Ombudsman's office within the timescale set and the Council's excellent performance on response times can be maintained.
8. That all Directorates continue to impose rigorous monitoring of complaint activity to ensure ongoing good practice and a continued reduction in complaints being received.
9. That the Annual Review Letter be posted on the Council's website.



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Director of Corporate Resources

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter for the year ended 31st March 2013.