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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 13</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>FRANK McARDLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EXT. 5702)</b>	<b>DOC:U:\JAYNE\Commtee\COMMRE P\LGO Annual Review 2018.docx</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2018 AND UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS TO THE OMBUDSMAN SERVICE</b>	<b>REF: J Beech</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 To accept the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2018.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 This report will provide Members with a summary of complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ("LGSCO") against this Authority during the year 2017/18.
- 2.2 It will also bring Members up to date on developments in the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman service.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the Council received the Annual Review Letter for the period 2017/18 and a summary of statistics on complaints.
- 3.2 The Ombudsman's Office made decisions on 8 complaints about the Council in 2017/18. Of these complaints, 4 were closed after initial enquiries, 2 were referred back for local resolution, advice was given on 1 complaint and 1 complaint was upheld and resolved.
- 3.3 The LGSCO does not provide detailed information about the statistics and, therefore, in order to provide some background information for Members, the Council's Ombudsman Link Officer has produced a table of complaint decisions, which is attached at **Annexe 'A'**. This provides a breakdown of the type of complaints received and a summary of the decisions.

## **LGSCO Developments**

### Future development of annual review letters

- 3.4 Last year, the LGSCO highlighted plans to move away from a simplistic focus on complaint volumes and instead turn focus onto the lessons that can be learned and the wider improvements that can be achieved through the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve services for the many. The Ombudsman has produced a new corporate strategy for 2018-21 which commits the service to more comprehensively publish information about the outcomes of investigations and the occasions when recommendations result in improvements to local services.
- 3.5 The LGSCO will be providing this broader range of data for the first time in next year's letters, as well as creating an interactive map of local authority performance on the website. The Ombudsman believes this will lead to improved transparency, as well as providing increased recognition to the improvements Councils have agreed to make following the Ombudsman's interventions. Views on the future format of the annual letters will be sought from Councils early next year.

### Supporting local scrutiny

- 3.6 One of the purposes of the annual letters to Councils is to help ensure learning from complaints informs scrutiny at the local level. Sharing the learning from LGSCO investigations and supporting the democratic scrutiny of public services continues to be one of the key priorities. The Ombudsman service has created a dedicated section of its website which contains a host of information to help scrutiny committees and councillors to hold their authority to account – complaints data, decision statements, public interest reports, focus reports and scrutiny questions. This can be found at [www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny](http://www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny). Elected members and scrutiny committees are encouraged to make use of these resources.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 A good complaints system is an opportunity for the Council to show that it cares about providing a good service, and that it genuinely values feedback on whether there are any problems which need attention. It is, therefore, imperative that we get feedback, not only through our own complaints system, but also from the Ombudsman, and that this information is widely distributed to show that this Authority takes complaints seriously and deals with them sympathetically.

## **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 One of the roles of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is to investigate complaints about Councils from members of the public. Its aim is to get Councils to put things right if they have gone wrong and if this has affected members of the public directly.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

7.1 The Annual Review Letter and the publishing of complaint decisions on the LGSCO website are useful additions to other information held by the Council, highlighting how people experience or perceive its services. They should also be seen as an opportunity to continue to improve the services offered by the Council.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

- Annual Review Letter 2018 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman