
REPORT TO:	COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM: 13
DATE OF MEETING:	22nd SEPTEMBER 2016	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	FRANK McARDLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EXT. 5702)	DOC:U:\JAYNE\Committee\COMMRE P\LGO Annual Review 2016.docx
SUBJECT:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2016 AND UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS TO THE OMBUDSMAN SERVICE	REF: J BEECH
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To accept the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2016.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report will provide Members with a summary of complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman ("LGO") against this Authority during the year 2015/16.
- 2.2 It will also bring Members up to date on developments in the LGO service.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 On 21st July 2016, the Council received the Annual Review Letter for the period 2015/16 and a summary of statistics on complaints.
- 3.2 The Ombudsman's Office made decisions on 9 complaints about the Council in 2015/16. Of these complaints, advice was given in 1 case, 4 were closed after initial enquiries, 2 were referred back for local resolution, 1 complaint was incomplete/invalid, and 1 complaint was not upheld.
- 3.3 The LGO does not provide detailed information about the statistics and, therefore, in order to provide some background information for Members, the Council's LGO 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.

LGO Developments

Ombudsman Reform

- 3.4 The government has announced the intention to produce draft legislation for the creation of a single ombudsman for public services in England. The Local Government Ombudsman supports this, as it will provide the public with a clearer route to redress in an increasingly complex environment of public service delivery.

- 3.5 The LGO says it will continue to support government in the realisation of the public service ombudsman and is advising on the importance of maintaining its 40+ years' experience of working with local government and its understanding of the unique accountability structures.

Dr Jane Martin, Local Government Ombudsman

- 3.6 This year's Annual Review will be the last to be written by Dr Martin, whose seven year term of office comes to an end in January 2017.

Manual for Councils

- 3.7 In June 2016, the LGO published a Manual for Councils. The manual is intended to provide detailed information about the LGO service, how it works and the processes followed when considering and investigating complaints. The Manual can be found on the LGO website using the following link:

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/advice-and-guidance/information-for-link-officers>

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 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 LGO 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 2016 from the Local Government Ombudsman