

Report to: **Audit & Governance Committee**

Date: **14 December 2023**

Title: **Local Government Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter**

Portfolio Area: **Councillor Nicky Hopwood
Executive Member – Performance**

Wards Affected: **All**

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Audit & Governance Committee REVIEWS the Ombudsman Annual Letter for 2022-23 (attached at Appendix A).

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) looks at complaints about the council where the complainant considers that we have not sufficiently addressed their concerns.
- 1.2 This report sets out the LGSCO's Annual Review Letter regarding complaints that they have considered during the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 (please see Appendix A).
- 1.3 During this period, the Ombudsman had received 16 complaints but concluded that none of them required investigation which demonstrates excellent complaint handling and resolution at a local level within the Council. This compares to two upheld investigations in the previous year.
- 1.4 It is therefore recommended that the Audit & Governance Committee note the letter at Appendix A

2. Overview of complaints handling

- 2.1 The Council continues to actively monitor complaints data and take steps to respond where required. The Council's complaints process has two stages:
 - Stage 1 – Complaints are received where a resident is dissatisfied with the service received from the Council. During the 22/23 year, 208 Stage 1 complaints were received. Of

those, 89 were upheld by the Council where we admit a mistake was made and take steps to put it right; and

- Stage 2 – If a resident feels that our stage 1 response had not suitably addressed their concerns, they can appeal to Stage 2. During the 22/23 year, 29 complaints were escalated to Stage 2. Of those, 10 were upheld (9 relating to Domestic Waste and 1 Planning Enforcement).

2.2 Where the complainant remains of the view that the Council has still not addressed their concerns at Stage 2, they can request that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman consider the matter.

3. Proposal and Next Steps

3.1 That the Audit & Governance Committee note the Ombudsman Annual Letter as set out in Appendix A to this report and the positive handling of Council complaints.

4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Ombudsman considers if the Council has complied with its own processes and procedures as well as statutory requirements.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	Effective complaint handling is one element of ensuring value for money for residents.
Risk	N	
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Performance and Resources
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	N	
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	N	
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		

Equality and Diversity	N	
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter

Background Papers:

None