

Board/Committee:	Standards and Audit Sub Board
Date of meeting:	19 September 2024
Title:	Local Government Ombudsman Review 2023/2024
Author:	Chief Executive
Status:	For Noting

Purpose

To advise the Sub Board of the Annual Review Letter 2024 received from the Local Government Ombudsman.

Recommendation

That the Sub-Board note the report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Ombudsman writes to all local authorities on an annual basis summarising the complaints about the authority which have been dealt with by the Ombudsman during the previous year ending 31 March.
- 1.2 The Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter for the year ended 31 March 2024 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Ombudsman received six complaints during 2023/24, comparative figures to 2022/23 are shown below. Definitions of service areas are determined by the Ombudsman.

Service Area	2022/23	2023/24
Housing Services	1	3
Corporate Services and other Services	1	3
Environmental Services	1	0
Benefits and Council Tax	1	0
Planning and Development (carried over from 2021/22)	1	0

- 2.2 The outcome of the complaints for 2023/24 is listed below with comparative figures to 2022/23.

Complaint outcome	2022/23	2023/24
Closed after initial enquiry	3	4
Closed with advice given	0	1
Complaints unresolved on publication of the annual letter	0	1
Investigated	2	0

2.3 Complaints closed after initial enquiries to the Council

Of the four complaints closed after initial enquiry in 2023/24 two were closed because they were not warranted by alleged fault, both of these were corporate and other services.

One complaint for corporate and other services was closed after initial enquiries under section 26(7) – A Local Commissioner shall not conduct an investigation in respect of any action which in his opinion affects all or most of the inhabitants, and the final complaint closed after initial enquiries was for housing and was done so as the complainant had alternative recourse to Court.

Other complaint outcomes

One of the complaints for housing was closed with advice given and without the Council's involvement as the complainant was directed to the Council's complaint policy.

The investigation into the final housing complaint had not been completed on publication of the Annual Letter and will be included in the report for 2024/25.

2.3 No complaints were formally investigated by the Ombudsman, down from two in 2022/23.

3.0 Risk assessment

3.1 It is important that the Council has an effective and robust Customer Complaints Procedure in place in order to minimise the instances of compensation being paid and reputational damage.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 It is intended that this review be published on the Council's website.

Financial Services	Comments :	None
Legal Services	Comments :	None
Climate Change		None

Implications	
Crime and Disorder	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	Working with our partners and communities to get things done. Listening and Innovating.
Risk Assessment:	See above
Background papers:	Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Statistics
Appendix 1:	Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review 2023/24
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Lisa Young