

\*PART A

**Report to:** Audit Committee  
**Date of meeting:** 29 September 2014  
**Report of:** Head of Democracy and Governance  
**Title:** Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2014

1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 To inform the committee about complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman for Watford in the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To note the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter

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**Report approved by:** Managing Director

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the Ombudsman's Annual Review letter for Watford for the financial year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Also attached as Appendix 2 is the Ombudsman's Review of Local Government Complaints for the year where she gives an overview of the whole picture of complaints about Local Government.

3.2 Up until 2012 the Annual Letter provided a comparison of the number of complaints received by them in the previous year and the time taken to reply to Ombudsman queries. However, last year the Ombudsman changed their systems and the way they reported complaints and they no longer provide comparisons or time taken to respond.

3.3 For 2013 the only information the Council received in the Annual Letter was that the Ombudsman had received 9 complaints.

- 3.4 This year the Annual Letter states that the Ombudsman received 19 complaints and enquiries and made 20 decisions. This number is different from the number of complaints received as some complaints may span financial years so a complaint may have been received in 2012/13 but not concluded until 2013/14, in addition there may well be complaints received in 2013/14 but not concluded by 31 March 2014.
- 3.5 The report states that one complaint was upheld after investigation, this was a complaint regarding a number of issues relating to the complainants privately rented accommodation and the complainants homelessness application some of which were not upheld but the Ombudsman did uphold that the Council could have made a decision on the complainants homelessness application sooner, however the Ombudsman found that this had not caused the complainant any injustice and that there was no action for the Council to take.
- 3.6 Also attached is the Ombudsman's Review of Local Government Complaints for 2013-14 for information.

#### 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

##### 4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report

##### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report

##### 4.3 **Equalities**

- 4.3.1 There are no implications

##### 4.4 **Potential Risks**

There are no risks

#### Appendices

- Appendix 1 Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2014 dated 7 July 2014-07-28  
Appendix 2 Review of Local Government Complaints 2013-14

#### Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

#### File Reference

None