

PART A

Report to: Audit Committee

AGENDA

ITEM **4**

Date of meeting: 26th September 2007

Report of: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Title: Ombudsman's Annual Letter

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the contents of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter and the Council's response be noted.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Carol Chen Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

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Report approved by: Managing Director

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Attached as appendix 1 is the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the year to 31st March 2007. The main points to note are the increase in the number of complaints made from 9 in 2005/6 to 22 in 2006/7.
- 3.2 The largest proportion of these, 10 related to housing, of which 7 were about repairs to the housing stock. Of those 7, 2 resulted in the Ombudsman agreeing to a local settlement between the Council and the complainant, whereby the Council acknowledged it was at fault and made an ex -gratia payment.
- 3.3 At appendix 2 is a response sent on behalf of the Council to the Ombudsman in relation to his comments on housing and in particular housing repairs issues.
- 3.4 The Ombudsman agreed to 2 other local settlements during the course of the year. One in relation to a parking ticket, and wording on the ticket in relation to a right of appeal. The penalty was repaid and the wording on tickets has been amended to make the right to an appeal more explicit. The second related to a delay in informing the complainant that they needed to apply for permission to implement alterations on an extant planning permission.
- 3.5 The Ombudsman did not find any maladministration, nor did he issue any formal reports against the Council.
- 3.6 Members will note on the attached tables that by 31st March 2007 the Ombudsman had yet to reach a conclusion on 5 matters. These will be reported in next year's Annual Letter.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Head of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report. The payments made as a result of local settlements came out of the relevant service departments budgets.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments that there are no implications arising from this report

- 4.3 **Equalities**
No implications
- 4.4 **Potential Risks**
No implications
- 4.5 **Staffing**
No implications
- 4.6 **Accommodation**
No implications
- 4.7 **Community Safety**
No implications
- 4.8 **Sustainability**
No implications

Appendices

1. Ombudsman's Annual Letter
2. Councils response

Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

None