

Part A

Report to: **Audit Committee**

Date of meeting: **Thursday, 17 September 2020**

Report author: **Group Head of Democracy and Governance**

Title: **Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2020**

1.0 **Summary**

1.1 Every year the Ombudsman sends every local authority a letter enclosing statistics relating to the number of complaints he has received and decided in the previous calendar year.

1.2 Attached as appendices are a copy of that letter received on 22 July 2020 and the table of cases received and decided during that year.

2.0 **Risks**

2.1 Not applicable the letter is for noting only

3.0 **Recommendations**

3.1 That the Ombudsman's Annual Letter be noted.

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4.0 **Detailed proposal**

4.1 The council received the Ombudsman's letter on 22 July 2020. A copy is appended to the report together with statistics of the number of complaints the Ombudsman received and the number decided from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

4.2 As the committee will note, the Ombudsman received 29 complaints and decided 30. This is because not all complaints received are necessarily determined within the year they are received. In fact, there are a number decided during the financial year that were received the previous year.

4.3 This year in the Annual Letter you will note that 56% of the complaints they investigated were upheld, compared with a 45% average in other authorities. They undertook nine investigations and upheld five complaints. Of those five, the council was asked by the Ombudsman to apologise in two and the council had already offered an apology in the other three, which the Ombudsman considered sufficient. In two of those latter three, the Ombudsman decided not to continue the investigation. The 3 the Ombudsman fully investigated were reported to Cabinet.

4.4 Of the 30 complaints decided during the last financial year, 13 were closed after initial inquiries, eight were referred back to the council as they had not been through our internal complaints process, five were upheld and four not upheld.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report. However the Ombudsman can ask the council to compensate a complainant in circumstances where he feels the complainant has suffered distress.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Not applicable.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 Not applicable

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 Not applicable

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 Not applicable

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 Not applicable

Appendices

- Ombudsman's Annual Letter
- Statistics for 2019/20

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.