

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Local Government Ombudsman – Annual Review 2013/14 17 September 2014

Chief Officer (Governance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) Annual Review Letter for the year ending 31 March 2014.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) For members to note the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter.

1.0 Background

There is now a single Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in England who provides an accessible and responsive complaints service directly to members of the public. The Ombudsman helps to make sure that local public services are accountable to people that use them by ensuring that local authorities put things right when they go wrong.

1.1 Key Issues in 2013/2014

The LGO's Annual Review Letter for 2013/14 is appended to this report for Members' information. The Ombudsman has this year also sent a copy of the letter to the leader of council and the chief executive.

Members will note the summary statistics relating to complaints and enquiries received and decisions made within the 12 month period. These figures are not comparable to those provided in previous years as the Ombudsman now uses a new business model to record complaints. There is also a change in the way decisions are described. They are now classified as either upheld or not upheld.

1.2 Complaints against Lancaster City Council

The report appended indicates that the Ombudsman received 19 complaints and enquiries against the Council in 2013/14. Disabled Facilities Grant complaints are now included within both Children Services and Adult Care complaints depending on the age of the complainant. As the council does not offer direct Children's and Adult Care services, this explains the figures in the letter.

As outlined in the report, there were 23 decisions made. Not every decision made will relate to a complaint made within the 12 month period. This explains the difference between the two figures (19 and 23) and there may be complaints registered within this period that have not yet been decided on. Likewise, decisions made within this period may have been registered in the previous year.

Six of these decisions followed detailed investigation by the Ombudsman. Three of these complaints were upheld. In the upheld complaints, the Council offered a remedy in two of these cases and a minor injustice was identified in the third complaint. Details of all decisions, unless confidential, made by the Ombudsman from April 2013 are now published on the Local Government Ombudsman website at: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/decisions/>.

2.0 Proposal Details

This report is for noting.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 There has been no consultation

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 There are no options as the report is for noting.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising directly from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2013/14

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