
Meeting of the Cabinet – 11th September 2019

Report of the Strategic Director Place / Deputy Chief Executive

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2019

Purpose

1. To note the Annual Review Letter for 2019 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and information in respect of complaints received against this Council and dealt with by the Ombudsman's office for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

Recommendations

2.
 - That the contents of the report and the Annual Review are noted.
 - That the Strategic Executive Board and Chief Officers continue to ensure that requests for information on complaints are dealt with by the date requested to ensure that the Council maximises its performance on response times and remedy of complaints is maintained.
 - That all Directorates continue to monitor and review their complaints actively to underpin ongoing good practice to achieve timely local resolution of complaints wherever possible.

Background

3. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a copy of the Annual Review Letter of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the financial year ended 31st March 2019. The information included in the tables highlights the number of complaints and enquiries received and decisions made, including information on complaints upheld and not upheld.
4. The summary of involvement on complaints by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are as follows:
 - The total number of complaints decided by the Ombudsman during this period was 80, of which 17 were subjected to a detailed investigation. The outcome of these detailed investigations was that 13 were upheld and 4 were not upheld.

- The remaining decisions were:
34 Referred back for local resolution
18 Closed after initial enquiries
5 Advice given
1 Incomplete or invalid
- The number of Upheld complaints decided by the Ombudsman for Dudley is 13. When compared to all English metropolitan boroughs we are in the 3rd performing quartile.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Dudley MBC	7	7	9	6	13
MET Quartile	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st	3 rd
Best/ lowest	4	2	3	1	4
MET Average	12	11	13	12	13
Worst/ highest	41	71	63	43	77

- The upheld decisions were in respect of Adult Care Services (8), Corporate and Other Services (2), Education and Children's Services (2), Environmental Services and Public Protection & Regulation (1).
- Not upheld complaints were in respect of Planning and Development (2), Adult Care Services (1), Corporate and Other Services (1).
- In respect of the complaints determined by the Ombudsman in the year to 31st March 2019, there are no public reports against the Council.

Finance

5. There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report. Any compensation determined, arising from an investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, is met from the relevant Directorate budgets.

Law

6. The Commission for Local Administration was created under Parts 1 and 3 of the Local Government Act 1974.

Equality Impact

7. The complaints that were subjected to a detailed investigation did not have any equality impacts. The role of the Ombudsman affords a system of complaint and redress to members of the public who feel they have been subjected to maladministration by the Council. Some complaints made concern children and young people so, dependent on the remedy proposed, there may have been either a direct or indirect impact upon them.

Organisational Development/Transformation

8. There are no direct Organisational Development/Human Resource implications arising from this report. Complaints are dealt with by Directorates within existing staffing resources.

Commercial/Procurement

9. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade or a positive / negative impact on our customer base.

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

10. Any impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of individuals would be considered depending on the circumstances of individual complaints. There are no direct Health, Wellbeing and Safety implications for this report.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter