



ARTICLE NO:

**CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE - 2018/19
ISSUE: 2**

Article of: Borough Solicitor

**Contact for further information: Mr M Jones(Extn. 5025)
(E-mail: mathew.jones@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMEN – STATISTICS 2017/18

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To inform Members of the Council's performance in respect of the Local Government Ombudsmen statistics 2017/18.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is overseen by two ombudsmen following changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011.

2.2 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) deals with complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as estate management, repairs to Council house properties, rent and service charges, possession proceedings and mutual exchanges.

2.3 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) deals with all other complaints against the Council across all the services it provides, including complaints by Council housing tenants about matters such as housing improvement grants, homelessness and statutory noise nuisance. The Council's response to enquiries and complaints received from the LGSCO and the HO are co-ordinated by the Legal and Member Services Manager.

2.4 In July 2018 the LGCSO published an annual review letter which provides a summary of statistics on enquiries and complaints made in respect of the Council for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. The annual review letter can be found at Appendix 1.

2.5 The HO does not currently publish an annual review of individual landlord performance. The Council's records indicate that the HO did not proceed to determine any complaints about the Council during 2017/18.

3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE-2017/18

- 3.1 During 2017/18 the LGSCO made decisions on 13 enquiries and complaints about the Council.
- 3.2 Of those 13 matters, 5 were referred back to the Council for local resolution (because the Council had not had an opportunity to properly consider the enquiry or complaint), 3 were closed after initial enquires and in 1 matter the complainant was given advice by the LGSCO about why the complaint could not be considered. Only 4 complaints proceeded to an investigation and in each of those matters the LGSCO found that the Council had not been at fault. Accordingly the complaints were not upheld.
- 3.3 Using information provided by the LGSCO I have prepared a table (Appendix 2) to allow a comparison of the Council's performance with the 11 other non-unitary district councils within Lancashire. Of those 11 authorities only 3 also had no complaints upheld against them.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Investigating and co-ordinating responses to enquiries and complaints made to the Ombudsmen takes officer time both for the Legal and Member Services Manager and for the service area to which the complaint or enquiry is directed. Given the importance to the Council in satisfactorily resolving enquires and complaints made by service users this work stream will continue to receive a high priority.

6.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 This article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this article.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter – West Lancashire Borough Council – 2017/18

Appendix 2: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - Table of Detailed Investigations – Lancashire Non-Unitary Councils – 2017/18