



**ARTICLE NO: 2C**

**CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE - 2016/17  
ISSUE: 2**

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**Article of: Borough Solicitor**

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMEN – STATISTICS 2015/16**

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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 2015/16.

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## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council is overseen by two ombudsmen following changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 the Housing Ombudsman (HO) has dealt 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. The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) continues to deal with all other complaints against the Council 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 LGO and the HO are co-ordinated by the Legal and Member Services Manager.
- 2.3 In July 2016 the LGO provided the Council with a summary of statistics on enquiries and complaints made in respect of the Council for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. This summary can be found at Appendix 1. In addition the LGO published its yearly report on local government complaint handling containing a summary of complaint statistics for each local authority in England to enable Councils to compare their performance against their peers. This report can be downloaded at [www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/local-government-complaint-reviews](http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/local-government-complaint-reviews)
- 2.4 The HO has does not currently publish a yearly report on individual landlord performance. However, I have provided an overview of the Council's performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup>

April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 at paragraph 4.1 of this update, derived from the statistics held by the Council.

### **3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE - 2015/16**

- 3.1 During 2015/16 the LGO made decisions on 15 enquiries and complaints about the Council. Of those 15 enquiries and complaints only 4 were the subject of a detailed investigation.
- 3.2 Of those 15 matters, 6 were referred back to the Council for local resolution (because the Council had not had an opportunity to properly consider the enquiry or complaint), 2 were closed after initial enquires, 2 were incomplete/invalid and in 1 matter the complainant was given advice by the LGO about why the LGO would not consider the complaint.
- 3.3. In relation to the 4 complaints investigated by the LGO, the Council were not found to be at fault and accordingly the complaints were not upheld.
- 3.4 Using information provided by the LGO I have prepared a table (Appendix 2) to allow a comparison of the Council's performance with the other district councils within Lancashire. Of the 12 district councils only 4 (including West Lancashire) had no complaints upheld against them.

### **4.0 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE – 2015/16**

- 4.1 During 2015/16 the HO made decisions on 2 enquires and complaints. Of those 2 matters, 1 was considered outside of the HO's jurisdiction, 1 was referred for local resolution (and satisfactorily resolved).

### **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. This article has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Investigating and co-ordinating responses to enquiries and complaints made to the Ombudsman 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.

### **7.1 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 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.

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### **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 Ombudsman - Summary of enquiries and complaints – West Lancashire Borough Council – 2015/16

Appendix 2: Local Government Ombudsman - Table of Detailed Investigations – Lancashire District Councils