



STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 3RD OCTOBER 2013

SUBJECT: ANNUAL LETTER FROM PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (2012-2013)

REPORT BY: INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Standards Committee on the Annual Letter (2012-2013) from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales regarding complaints received and investigated by the Ombudsman.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The duty to oversee complaints received and investigated by the Ombudsman is within the terms of reference of this Committee.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Annual Letter setting out a clear and concise breakdown of all complaints received and investigated by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during 2012/13 in relation to Caerphilly was received in July 2013.
- 3.2 A copy of the Annual Letter is attached at Appendix 1 to the Report.
- 3.3 Members will note that the data attached as an appendix to the Annual Letter includes a detailed breakdown of complaints received and investigated, and response times to requests for information.
- 3.4 This data is self-explanatory and therefore no further comment is offered other than to ask the Committee to formally note the following:
- 3.4.1 In relation to Caerphilly, there has been a large decrease in the number of complaints received and investigated by the Ombudsman compared with 2011/12 and these figures are now also below average.
- 3.4.2 Committee will note the graph on page 7 of the data identifies a decrease in the number of "premature" complaints received by the Ombudsman and following clarification from the Ombudsman's office the penultimate paragraph of the Annual Letter will be amended to reflect a reduction when compared to 2011/12 (not an increase).
- 3.4.3 The number of "upheld" reports issued by the Ombudsman either in whole or in part is above average.
- 3.4.4 Details of the Code of Conduct complaints for elected Members will be found at Section H of the appendix to the letter. The Committee will note the reduction in the number of complaints the Ombudsman decided not to investigate. There were no complaints upheld in relation to member conduct complaints.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 This Report reflects the contents of the Annual Letter and therefore there has been no formal consultation on the contents of this Report. A copy of the Report has been provided to the consultees listed below.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report. The report will be placed before Council on 8th October 2013.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 To satisfy the Council's statutory duties under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005.

10. STATUTORY POWERS

10.1 Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, Local Government Act 1974.

Author: Gail Williams Interim Monitoring Officer

Consultees: For information only

Stuart Rosser, Interim Chief Executive

Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive

Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services

Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services

Daniel Perkins, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Cllr. Harry Andrews, Leader of the Council

Cllr. Keith Reynolds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Chair of Standards Committee

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Annual Letter from Public Services Ombudsman