



COUNCIL - 10TH OCTOBER 2017

SUBJECT: ANNUAL LETTER FROM PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2016-2017

REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES/MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The attached report was presented to the Standards Committee on the 28th September, 2017. The Annual Letter, received from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, provides a breakdown for all complaints received and investigated by his office during 2016/17.
- 1.2 The Standards Committee noted that in relation to Caerphilly, the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman was at a similar level (56 in 2015/16 compared to 54 this year).
- 1.3 The Committee was informed that the figures show that the Authority's largest area of complaint is Housing. This data has been analysed and of the twelve complaints made in relation to Housing, six were made prematurely, i.e. had been referred to the Ombudsman before exhausting the Council's Corporate Complaints Process and one complaint was referred out of time. The remaining five referrals were not taken into investigation. Practically it is not possible to prevent premature referrals to the Ombudsman. The Council's Complaints Policy is available via the Council's website and a hard copy booklet readily available to the public.
- 1.4 Members noted the Annual letter made reference to the fact that there was a significant drop in Children's Social Services Complaints from 9 to 3; there were no upheld complaints this year and only 7% of cases required PSOW intervention which is the second lowest of any local authority.
- 1.5 Members also noted that overall 14 premature complaints were received by the Ombudsman. This is slightly less than the Local Authority average of 15, but as mentioned above there is nothing further than can be done by the Council to prevent premature referrals.
- 1.6 There were four early resolutions/interventions by the PSOW. Three of the four were Social Services complaints the fourth was in relation to waste collection. A summary of the cases can be found on the PSOW website www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk under the Ombudsman's Casebook.
- 1.7 Details of the Code of Conduct complaints for elected Members will be found at Section E of the appendix to the letter. There were 7 code of conduct complaints made against Members of Caerphilly County Borough Council during 2016/17. Six were closed after initial consideration, one found no evidence of a breach.
- 1.8 The Standards Committee noted the content of the amended Annual Letter and were advised that it will be presented to Council.

1.9 Members are asked to note the content of the amended Annual Letter, received from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

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Appendix: Report to Standards Committee – 28th September, 2017