

## OMBUDSMEN COMPLAINTS

### Executive Summary

The Committee is responsible for the oversight of payments in cases of maladministration that are neither disputed nor significant (which are dealt with by the Monitoring Officer).

This report provides details of recent complaints to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

### Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE That** the position regarding complaints to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.
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**Background Papers:** None.

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution provides for the Standards and Audit Committee to have "oversight of payments in cases of maladministration which are neither disputed nor significant (which are dealt with by the Monitoring Officer)." Full Council retains responsibility for "disputed/significant payments in cases of maladministration".
- 1.2 At its meeting on 7 July 2016, the Committee asked for an annual report on Ombudsmen complaints. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman provides Councils with an Annual Review letter in July each year. It is, therefore, sensible for the annual report to be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.

### 2.0 Ombudsmen

- 2.1 The Council is subject to the oversight of two Ombudsmen, the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
- 2.2 The Housing Ombudsman considers complaints arising from the provision of housing by the Council if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of New Vision Homes/the Council's consideration of the complaint.
- 2.3 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman considers complaints arising from the provision of other, non-housing, services by the Council if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Council's consideration of the complaint.

### 3.0 Complaints submitted to the Ombudsmen

- 3.1 A copy of the 2020 Annual Review letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman is appended to this report. This gives a summary of statistics for decisions made by the Ombudsman on complaints, about the Council, for the year ended 31 March 2020. It can be seen that the Council was the subject of three detailed investigations during that period. None of the complaints was upheld by the Ombudsman.
- 3.2 Unlike in previous years, the Annual Review letter does not detail the total number of complaints made against the Council. For the year ended 31 March 2020, this was seven.
- 3.3 The Housing Ombudsman does not issue an Annual Review letter. This report, therefore, details cases considered by the Housing Ombudsman since those referred to in last year's annual report, i.e. the period between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020.
- 3.4 The Housing Ombudsman is currently considering two complaints about the Council. The first complaint relates to repairs. The second complaint relates to repairs, parking and level of service provided.

### 4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 Although it would be preferable for there to be no complaints to the Ombudsmen, this is never going to happen due to (i) the varied nature of the services provided by the Council and (ii) the number of recipients of those services. That said, the number of complaints is not disproportionate. It is also noteworthy that no complaints were upheld by the Ombudsmen. There are no matters of concern which the Monitoring Officer needs to bring to the attention of the Committee.

**5.0 Implications**

Financial

5.1 None.

Human Resource/Training and Development

5.2 None.

Community Safety

5.3 None.

Risk Management

5.4 None.

Sustainability

5.5 None.

Equalities

5.6 None.

Safeguarding

5.7 None.

REPORT ENDS