

## OMBUDSMEN COMPLAINTS

### Executive Summary

The Committee is responsible for the oversight of payments in cases of maladministration which 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 authority to determine the above recommendations.**

**Background Papers:** None which are public.

**Reporting Person:** Joanne McIntosh, Legal Services Manager/Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Ext. 3038, E Mail: Joanne.McIntosh@woking.gov.uk

**Contact Person:** Joanne McIntosh, Legal Services Manager/Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Ext. 3038, E Mail: Joanne.McIntosh@woking.gov.uk

**Date Published:** 12 September 2018

### 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 2018 Annual Review letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman is appended to this report. This details (i) the complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman and (ii) the decisions made by him for the year ended 31 March 2018.
- 3.2 It can be seen from the Annual Review letter that the Council was the subject of twelve complaints and enquiries to the Ombudsman, with the Ombudsman deciding twelve cases during the period concerned (note:- the twelve decisions do not all relate to the twelve complaints). No complaints were the subject of a finding of maladministration by the Ombudsman.
- 3.3 The Housing Ombudsman does not issue an Annual Review letter. This report, therefore, details cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman since those referred to in last year's annual report, i.e. the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018. There were two complaints to the Housing Ombudsman during this period. One related to a water leak, where the Housing Ombudsman confirmed that there was no maladministration by the Council. The other complaint relates to anti-social behaviour, and is being considered by the Housing Ombudsman.

### 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 reported is not disproportionate and it is noteworthy that no complaints resulted in adverse findings against the Council. 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.

REPORT ENDS