

Ward: N/A

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints analysis - September 2016 - March 2017

Report by the Director for Customer Service

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides further analysis on the most recent Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints that have been processed by the Councils.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Commission for Local Administration in England was created by Part 3 of the Local Government Act 1974 to run the Local Government Ombudsman service. The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints by members of the public who, generally, have had complaints considered by the Local Authority, but still consider that they have been caused injustice by the administrative actions of Local Authorities and other bodies within the jurisdiction of the LGO.

2.2 The Committee has previously requested further analysis on the LGO complaints and as part of this ongoing analysis it received a report to its meeting on 27 September 2016.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 A detailed analysis of the most recent ongoing LGO complaints is now provided in the table below which covers the period September 2016 to March 2017.

3.2 For this period of reporting there were **no complaints referred from the LGO relating to Worthing Borough Council:-**

<u>Description of complaint</u>	<u>LGO decision</u>
<u>Adur District Council</u>	
Complaint about the failure to investigate a noise nuisance issue.	Complaint not upheld. The Local Government Ombudsman found no fault in the way that the Council dealt with a temporary event notice from a nearby football club. There was also no fault in the way that the Council investigated the complaint about noise from the football club's clubhouse.

Complaint that the Council did not properly investigate about an unknown Councillor breaching the Councillor Code of conduct and other related matters.	The Local Government Ombudsman stated that she would not investigate the complaint that a Councillor breached the Members Code of Conduct and would be unlikely to find fault in the Council's actions. The Ombudsman could not investigate the complaints about employment matters as they were outside his jurisdiction.
Complaint that the Council failed to deal properly with Housing Benefit and Council Tax matters.	Most of the complaint not upheld about matters related to the Benefit claims but the Council was at fault for not acting on some financial information that the complainant sent but that fault did not in itself disadvantage the complainant significantly.
Complaint about the way that the Council dealt with a planning application for two new properties on land next to his home.	Complaint not upheld and the Local Government Ombudsman did not criticise the Council for approving the planning application. There was no fault in the Council's handling of the planning application complained about.
Complaint about the way that the Council handled a housing application request.	Local Government Ombudsman investigation is ongoing. Decision pending.

3.3 The Service areas which have been generating the recorded LGO complaints since September 2014 have been broken down as follows.

<u>Adur District Council</u>	
Planning	5 Not upheld
Environmental Health	3 (2 Not upheld and 1 partially upheld)
Housing	2 (1 Partially upheld and 1 decision pending)
Census (Revenues & Benefits)	4 (2 not upheld, 2 partially upheld)
Legal	1 (Not upheld)
<u>Worthing Borough Council</u>	
Parks and Foreshore	2 not upheld
Housing Services	2 not upheld
Planning	2 not upheld
Revenues and Benefits	3 (1 upheld and 2 not upheld)
Democratic Services	1 (not upheld)
Financial Services	1 (not upheld)

4.0 Analysis of Complaints and compliments for 2017/18

- 4.1 Increased scrutiny and analysis of complaints and compliments continues to ensure that the available complaints and compliments data is accurate. A new in-house digital complaints and compliments system has now been developed and built. Complaints and compliments are now recorded on the new system which provides improved recording and a reporting Dashboard is being tested and adapted.
- 4.2 Directors and Heads of Service will use complaints as opportunities to make continuous improvements to services.

5.0 Legal

- 5.1 The role of the Local Government Ombudsman is governed by Part 3 of the Local Government Act 1974.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the report and agrees to receive a further analysis of Local Government Ombudsman complaints in September 2017.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

None.

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 Matter considered. Priority to review customer complaints handling and reporting.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Reputation

7.1 Responding in a timely and open manner to investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman assists the Council to improve their service, service delivery and reputation.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.