



# ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Joint Governance Committee  
27 March 2018  
Agenda Item 11

Ward(s) Affected:N/A

## **Local Government Ombudsman Complaints**

### **Report by the Director for Digital & Resources**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1.Purpose**

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

##### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the report and agrees to receive a further analysis of Local Government Ombudsman complaints in September 2018.

##### **3. Context**

3.1 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.

3.2 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 26 September 2017.

#### 4. Issues for consideration

4.1 A detailed analysis of the most recent ongoing LGO complaints is now provided in the table below which covers the period September 2017 to March 2018. This also includes information available on the outcomes of any decisions which were pending from the previous report on this matter to the Committee in September 2017:-

<u>Description of complaint</u>	<u>LGO decision</u>
<b><u>Adur District Council</u></b>	
Ref No: 565481 - Complaint that the Council increased, without notification, the taxi tariff in December 2016 which the complainant claims caused him a loss of income.	Upheld. Fault causing injustice found which the Council has suitably offered to put right by its apologies and offered to pay £75 compensation.
Ref No: 006512 - Complaint that the Council did not tell the complainant of her father's death and his property was subsequently burgled and money allegedly stolen. The complainant also disputes that her father owed Council Tax.	Not upheld. No fault found against Council. Not enough evidence provided to support allegations. Landlord and burglary issues are Police matters.
<b><u>Worthing Borough Council</u></b>	
Ref No 279747 - Complaint about the handling of a planning application by the Planning Committee and the handling of a complaint under the Council's complaints procedure.	Complaint upheld, fault found against the Council in the time taken to deal with the complaint at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. Council recommended to apologise to complainant and pay £150 for time spent pursuing complaint.
Ref No 010152 - Complaint about the Council's housing review decision.	Complaint Partially upheld; The Council acted in line with policy when Banding complainant on the housing waiting list and so there is no fault. Records indicate complainant could not have moved out of Bed & Breakfast earlier because the second property needed repairs. The extended time in Bed & Breakfast resulted in breach of the Suitability Order & Council is at fault. Recommendation for Council to remedy the injustice, the Council should apologise and pay £100.

4.2 The Service areas which have been generating the recorded LGO complaints during the periods of reporting to the Committee since 2014 have been broken

down as follows:-

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

## **5.0 Analysis of Complaints and compliments for 2017/18**

- 5.1 At the meeting of the Committee in March 2017, a request was made for this report to also include some additional information on compliments received by the Councils. A summary of the most recent compliments received in Q3 2017/18 is attached in the appendix to this report.
- 5.2 Increased scrutiny and analysis of complaints and compliments continues to ensure that the available complaints and compliments data is accurate.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report but any upheld complaints by the Local Government Ombudsman might have some financial implications for the Councils.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

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

## **Background Papers**

None.

### **Officer Contact Details:-**

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Matter considered. Complaints may impact on economic development if they are related to those issues.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

The outcomes from complaints may impact on our communities or individuals.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Matter considered. No direct implications.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no direct implications.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no direct implications.

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered and there are no direct implications.

### **4. Governance**

Matter considered. The outcomes from complaints might impact on the reputation of the Councils.

<u>Ref No</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Compliment</u>
691457	Mayor/Democratic Services	Email to say thank you to the Mayor regarding the honour paid to his father relating to the M.S.S Moore ceremony
692171	Customer & Digital (Parking)	Private message sent from Facebook -  I just wanted to ask you to pass on my thanks to the man who was in the Buckingham Road car park office on Monday. I was walking back to the car park and there were some "street drinkers" hanging around outside the toilets at the other end (by the body shop) who were blocking the path. I said "excuse me please" and they started shouting at me. I was very scared (had my one year old son in the pushchair!) and when I got to the foyer bit by the ramp to pay, I was pleased to see your man just coming out the office. I asked him to stay with me while I paid- and then promptly burst into tears (very embarrassing!) - he stayed with me while I paid even though I hadn't explained why, and then as I was putting my son into the car, I saw him appear at the end and watch to make sure we had got into the car ok, without even knowing why (although he may have heard them shouting). Anyway long story but I didn't get the chance to thank him, and I was extremely grateful for his presence.
700713	II	Staff at Guildbourne car park were fantastic when helping a ladies heavily pregnant daughter with her shopping whilst her mother got the car. They did this even when there were long queues due to out of order machines. It made the member of public's day and they appreciated the kind gesture.
702041	II	Twitter message thanking parking for their concern for a member of the public who was detained under the Mental Health Act and who helped in calling the Police
714495	II	Member of public went back to his car at the High Street Multi Storey car park and couldn't find his Fiat 500. He believed it had been stolen, the staff treated him with courtesy and patience in order to locate the car. Albert Hooson searched for the car, and him and his colleague were very polite and understanding to this customer on a stressful day.
700733	Customer & Digital (Contact Centre)	Adur Homes repair customer called to praise Matt Orton on his handling of a recent repair issue. Matt made the process pleasant as he took a personal interest in her case and was a generally lovely guy who was willing to go above and beyond for her.
703403	II	On social sign in resident enquired about council tax move and wheelie bins as moving. Insight team replied back within 10 minutes with information regarding this service. Rachael (the resident) then replied back on Facebook -  Best service EVER! Just spoke to Connor in customer service and he sorted the bins out for me! Thanks so so much for your help, we are so excited about the new home!
710277	II	Customer wanted to thank Matt Orton in the Contact Centre for booking him a bulky waste collection. He said he did a wonderful and courteous job.
710347	II	Customer called for assistance with her council tax due to suffering financial difficulties and needing to make an arrangement. States that;  Nigel was an absolute diamond, a little ray of sunshine. He was kind and friendly and even though I kept him beyond his home time, he didn't mind at all. He absolutely put my mind at rest and has helped to reset the payments going forward so that I can keep to my payments. This may not seem a big thing but to me it has helped immensely to alleviate a bit of the pressure I have been under.  I just want this amazing guy to get the thanks and recognition he deserves. I do hope you will please pass on my thanks to him and that he will get either a payrise or some sort of reward for his excellent customer service.
711967	II	Housing Benefit claimant emailing in to thank Customer Services as "each time my wife or I have called in to keep you informed of progress, we have been treated by your staff with efficiency and understanding".
712897	II	Customer called to express her gratitude to Matt Orton for being so calming and reassuring, when her cat went missing and how helpful he has been. She said he said and did exactly what she needed at that time and that he deserves a gold star.
713437	II	A customer from housing emailed Amanda Baker back to advise that they are now on the register and thanking her for her patience and genuine concern.
714519	II	Customer called to say Amanda in the Contact Centre had given him excellent customer service. He was very happy with the level of service provided and wanted to pass on his appreciation.

717887	II	Housing Benefit claimant thanking Natalie Buckman from the Shoreham Centre for her assistance in confirming receipt of benefit when being referred to the PDSA so their dog could get treatment.
717953	II	A compliment for a Customer Services Advisor on an AWCS call. There was a swift response from Guy when a customer called who had a fly tipped freezer outside her house. They found CCTV footage of this to help them identify the culprits.
720791	II	Email complimenting staff members who handled their council tax & electoral service registrations. States they were friendly, courteous & full of useful information making them feel welcome.
720853	II	Council Tax customer phoned especially to thank Customer Service Advisor for his help when discussing a Council Tax issue involving customers daughter.
721471	II	Customer came in to Portland House and brought in Christmas chocolates and mince pies by way of thanks to Jan White.
692325	Director for Digital & Resources	Senior Programme Manager thanking Paul Brewer for his attendance in the Government ICT 2.0 Conference and for his presentation.
722779	II	Twitter user complimenting Director for Digital & Resources on the digital service design blueprint for Local Government.
712921	Place & Investment	Email thanking Team for the fantastic job they are doing on a certain project. The officers are inclusive, enthusiastic and seem genuinely committed to help make a difference.
692171	Planning & Development	Customer complimented officer on the knowledge she provided to customers when showing plans of the replacement house with roof terrace next to the customers house.
692277	II	Thanks sent to Sarah Foster by email for help with a planning application.
692303	II	Resident thanking Gary Peck for letting them know an applicant withdrew a planning application. Thanking him for his help and doing a good job as always.
702019	II	Surveyor thanking Planning for acting positively and proactively in working together to deliver a constructive outcome.
703237	II	Customer thanking Hannah Barker for her assistance which is very much appreciated. Also commented on the excellent service.
705807	II	Resident contacted planning as they were needing evidence of the planning consent required to sell their property. Planning replied next working day with relevant information. The resident was very happy with the service and thankful for the prompt, helpful reply.
710031	II	Customer thanking Dawn Ayres for impressively efficient service when emailing.
715353	II	Conveyancer contacted us for information on planning permission. Viki Beer replied by email and then received thanks from the conveyancer regarding the information they needed and how helpful it will be.
718613	II	Planning replied to a customers email regarding a TPO the same day they emailed in. This led to the customer thanking Planning for their quick and excellent service.
718637	II	Gary Peck received a compliment from an architect stating how impressed he was with his swift response and the good news he could deliver. He was pleased to move forward with Mr Peck on the matter.
719589	II	Member of public sent a text message to Head of Service thanking him for a presentation.
720467	II	Member of public thanking planning support assistant for their efforts and fantastic customer service.
721505	II	Customer has sent a tweet saying "planning approved 2 weeks early! Thanks @adurandworthing only a few more to do, very happy developer client"
721525	II	Customer has sent a tweet saying "Planning approved 4 weeks early! Thanks @adurandworthing council, you guys are on fire, Very happy developer client"
722587	II	An email - You were a great help when we were considering buying the property and just wanted to say thank you for taking the time to guide us through the maze that is involved when creating a useful purpose for these two old buildings.

692213	Environmental Services (Parks)	Customer thanks to Stewart for his maintenance of Buckingham park green.
692231	Environmental Services (Waste & Cleansing)	Thanks sent for resiting the litter bin in the bowling green area of Church House gardens Tarring, removing the taking off point for children to jump onto shed roofs perhaps damaging them or hurting themselves
692253	II	The area around the residents house had been swept, even with all the parked cars around. Very impressed how quickly this was done as the pavement was becoming very slippery due to wet leaves.
703217	II	Customer wanted to express what a great job the council do in removing fly tipping. It makes a great deal of difference to the community.
708241	II	Customer used our bulky waste service and commented on the crews politeness, helpfulness and professionalism.
710133	II	Customer called to show her amazement and appreciation for the clean up done after the Tide of Lights. She saw the mess that was left afterwards and when she went for a walk the next morning, it was spotlessly clean all along the prom and she was very impressed.
715333	II	Customer pleased that their replacement large blue recycling bin was delivered the day after calling to request this. They were impressed with the efficient service.
716143	II	Customer wanted to thank AWCS for offering such a good service. She has used us several times for both home and business, and says we are nothing less than 100% polite, helpful and efficient. She ordered a green garden bin yesterday and within 2 hours it had been delivered. We knock spots off many a private company.
716169	II	Customer requested a green bin Monday and it arrived Tuesday. Pleased with the great service provided.
720131	II	Member of public thanking AWCS driver for coming back to collect his missed bin collection. He was impressed by the customer service of the team and their hard work.
721607	II	Worthing Minigolf have sent a tweet saying "@AdurWorthingCS promptly removing graffiti from our neighbouring kiosk - always doing a great job, often behind the scenes and also when we're often in bed @adurandworthing"
712871	Housing (Repairs & Maintenance)	I visited a customer who lives in Channel View, Whiterock Place, Southwick and was told that the new cleaners are very good and especially liked the bubble gum fragranced leaning fluid (foam) that they are using. They were especially please with the fresh pleasant smell left in the block that lasted for about five days.
717927	II	Customer called to praise the speed with which her leaky sink was fixed. She also extended that the gentleman that attended was very good, friendly and had a great attitude.
720739	II	Customer thanking Adur Homes workmen for fixing his fence all whilst being cheerful, tidying up after themselves and being polite and chatty.
719927	Housing Solutions	Thank you for quick and friendly response as usual.
721677	II	I would like to thank you all for your unwavering support for customer. She has come in today to share the good news about the banding change and your help with her arrears. As a school, we are now focusing our attentions on supporting Jamie to stay in school and finding the correct place for him. Thank you all once again for all your advice and help.
721697	II	Seeing you today has prompted me to say a belated thank you for all your help a few months ago. I wouldn't have got through the process without your knowledge and support. Thank your manager for allowing you to do it as well. Glad that flexibility in your role was granted. It has been a real rollercoaster past few months but in short I managed to sell house albeit cheaply, debts sorted, equity in bank, roof for the kids and I, looking forward and making plans. You really made a difference for us and went way above what you had to. I will always be indebted. Truly many thanks
721717	II	Thank you for your e-mail. Pleased that customer has been placed in Band A for which he is very grateful. Thank you for your involvement.
721735	II	You are a star. Many thanks to you and Catriona for providing this information. It is really helpful.



721657	Private Sector Housing	I just wanted to thank you for help during the problems with the tenancy. The landlord made a claim on the deposit of £625 and thanks to the information which you provided he was only awarded £90, I hope he has improved the flat and the next tenants are happier in the flat. Thanks again from myself and my son.
714943	Wellbeing (Environmental Protection)	Senior Environmental Health Officer Michael Lavender wrote to the manager of a public house regarding a noise complaint surrounding their Karaoke evenings. Customer replied thanking Michael for his help as the Karaoke was much better as they couldn't hear it was on after 8pm.
717985	Business & Technical Services	Customer emailed in to compliment us on the Christmas decorations and trees in Worthing town centre. She said the mini trees sparkling on the posts were wonderful from Rowlands Road to WH Smiths. It looked fantastic and she thanked the Council for the magnificent display.
721797	Revenues & Benefits	Housing Benefit applicant thanking Benefit Team Leader for their help in resolving an issue with regards to student finance.