

Bolsover District Council**Executive****31st October 2016**

Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman 2015/16

Report of the Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement

This report is public.

Purpose of the Report

- To provide information contained within the Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) 2015/16.

1 Report Details

The document contains an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made about the Authority for the financial year ending 31st March 2016. Please note that the data provided by the LGO may not align with the data this Council holds. This is because their numbers include enquiries from people who have been signposted by the LGO back to the Council, but who may then choose not to pursue their complaint.

The Annual Letter 2015/16 has been appended for your information.

Key points from the letter, specifically in relation to Bolsover District Council:

- The LGO received 10 enquiries and complaints during 2015/16, only 2 of which were subject to detailed investigations.
- The LGO decided 10 complaints, 2 of which were incomplete or invalid, 3 were referred back to the Council, 3 were closed after initial enquiries and the remaining 2 were not upheld.

Benchmarking information - CIPFA Nearest Neighbour

When looking at close neighbouring authorities, the following is noted:

	Detailed investigations	Total complaints received
Ashfield District Council	2	17
Bassetlaw District Council	3	17
Bolsover District Council	2	10
Chesterfield District Council	1	7
Erewash District Council	4	13
Mansfield District Council	4	26
NE Derbyshire District Council	2	16

Whilst Bolsover District Council received 10 complaints against its services, it is pleasing that only 2 were the subject of detailed investigations and the complaints were not upheld.

It is noteworthy that 3 complaints were closed after initial enquiries and 3 were referred back to the Council to put through its complaints system. This appears to indicate that the LGO is satisfied that the Council is administering its complaints procedure fairly.

Although this report is regarding complaints directed to the LGO, the Council also received 1 complaint via the Housing Ombudsman (HO) for the same period. After initial enquiries the Housing Ombudsman decided that the complaint fell outside of their jurisdiction.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

The report is to keep Elected Members informed of volumes and trends regarding LGO/ HO complaints.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

The report is to keep Elected Members regularly informed of volumes and trends regarding LGO/ HO complaints. No consultation or equality impact assessment is required.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not applicable as the report is keep Elected Members informed rather than to aid decision making.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

Whilst there are no direct financial implications with regard to the report, the Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well.

In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

The Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman. There are no Data Protection implications.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed.

6 **Recommendation**

That Executive receive the report and the Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman 2015/16.

7 **Decision Information**

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	N/a
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Providing Our Customers with Excellent Service. Transforming Our Organisation – good governance

8 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
A:	Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman 2015/16
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Customer Standards and Complaints Officer	Ext: 2353