

Bolsover District Council**Executive****11th September 2017**

Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman 2016/17

Report of the Portfolio Holder – Corporate Services

This report is public.

Purpose of the Report

- To provide information contained within the Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) 2016/17.

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 2017. Please note that the data provided by the LG&SCO may not align with the data this Council holds. This is because their numbers include enquiries from people who have been signposted by the LG&SCO back to the Council, but who may then choose not to pursue their complaint.

The Annual Letter 2016/17 has been appended (Appendix A) and supporting information Complaints Decided (Appendix B) and Complaints Received (Appendix C) for your information.

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

- The LG&SCO received 7 enquiries and complaints during 2016/17, only 2 of which were subject to detailed investigations.
- The LG&SCO decided 9 complaints, 2 were referred back to the Council, 4 were closed after initial enquiries and the remaining 3 were upheld (one of which was from the previous year).

Benchmarking information - CIPFA Nearest Neighbour

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

	Detailed investigations	Total complaints received
Ashfield District Council	2	18
Bassetlaw District Council	9	20
Bolsover District Council	2	7
Chesterfield District Council	1	11
Erewash District Council	1	8
Mansfield District Council	1	16
NE Derbyshire District Council	3	11

Whilst Bolsover District Council received 7 complaints against its services, only 2 were the subject of detailed investigations.

It is noteworthy that 4 complaints were closed after initial enquiries and 2 were referred back to the Council to put through its complaints system. This appears to indicate that the LG&SCO is satisfied that the Council is administering its complaints procedure fairly.

Although this report is regarding complaints directed to the LG&SCO, the Council did not receive any complaints via the Housing Ombudsman (HO) for the same period.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

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

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

The report is to keep Elected Members regularly informed of volumes and trends regarding LG&SCO/ 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 & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well.

In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government & Social Care 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 & Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing 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 & Social Care Ombudsman 2016/17.

7 Decision Information

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: <i>BDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	<p>No</p>
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	<p>Providing Our Customers with Excellent Service. Transforming Our Organisation – good governance</p>

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A:	Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman 2016/17
B:	Complaints Decided
C:	Complaints Received
<p>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)</p>	
Report Author	Contact Number
Customer Standards and Complaints Officer	Ext: 2353