

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2022/23 (JO)

1. Purpose of the report

This report provides details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (the Ombudsman) Annual Review of complaints for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Key Issues

- **The Ombudsman's Annual Review has not stated any concerns about the Authority's performance.**
- **The complaint statistics provided focus on 3 key areas – Complaints Upheld, Compliance with Ombudsman Recommendations and Satisfactory remedies provided by the Authority.**

2. Recommendation

- 1. To note the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2022-23 at Appendix 1 of the report.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The Authority publishes complaints reports bi-annually in Quarters 2 and 4 each year. These reports give Members the opportunity to discuss learnings and improvements that have been made as a result of this feedback, including from complaints which have been referred to the Ombudsman. Reviewing complaints will contribute to the Authority's aim to be inspiring, pioneering and enabling in delivering the National Park Vision by having best practice governance arrangements in place.

Background Information

4. The annual review letter from the Ombudsman is reported annually. Appendix 1 shows the Ombudsman's annual review for the Authority covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
5. The letter shows that the Ombudsman received two complaints in relation to the Authority during this period. Both of these complaints were regarding Planning and Development.
6. As can be seen in Appendix 1, of the two investigations that the Ombudsman made during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, neither of the complaints were upheld. They were both reported to Members at the Authority Meeting on the 11th November 2022 – minute number 89/22.
7. The Ombudsman's investigation reports and decisions can be viewed on the Ombudsman's website via the following links:

[22 010 333 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

[22 010 893 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
8. Appendices 2 and 3 of this report show the benchmark figures for complaints and enquiries received and determined by the Ombudsman for National Park Authorities and provide an average marker of performance.

Proposals

9. It is proposed that the details of the Ombudsman’s annual review, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, are noted and to acknowledge that complaints can provide a useful insight about the Authority’s performance, detecting early warning signs of potential problems and offering opportunities to improve service delivery.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

10. We handle complaints within existing resources. However, when a complaint has to be investigated it is often time consuming and distorts planned work programmes.

Risk Management:

11. The following risks have been identified at this time:
- Failure to ensure action is taken to improve service or address a problem as appropriate in response to complaints received.
 - Failure to improve the way we handle and respond to customers making complaints.
 - Unreasonable cost in time and staff resource spent in dealing with complaints.

Action taken as a result of complaints received and our procedure for handling unreasonably persistent complaints help us to mitigate these risks.

Sustainability:

12. The Authority’s complaints procedure highlights that:
- All comments and complaints are treated in confidence and will not disadvantage complainants in any future dealings they might have with the Authority.
 - Everyone will be treated fairly.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

13. There are no issues to raise.

Climate Change

14. There are no issues to raise.

Background papers (not previously published)

15. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s Annual Review Letter 2022-23, 19 July 2023

Appendix 2 - Benchmark figures for complaints received by the Ombudsman for National Park Authorities

Appendix 3 - Benchmark figures for complaints determined by the Ombudsman for National Park Authorities

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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