

CABINET MEETING – 12 FEBRUARY 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Ombudsman's Annual Review 2012 - 2013

Author(s):

Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Head of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

To advise Members of the number and outcome of complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2012 - 2013. To inform Members of the increase in transparency within the Ombudsman service.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the Ombudsman's annual review and in particular that there were no findings of maladministration against the council for the municipal year 2012 - 2013.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?

N/A

If not, council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

It is relevant to note the findings in the context of the council's performance in dealing with complaints.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options submitted for consideration.

Impacts analysed;

Equality N/A

Privacy N/A

Sustainability N/A

Crime and Disorder N/A

**Is this a “Key Decision” as defined
in the Constitution?**

No

**Is it included in the 28 Day Notice
of Decisions?**

No

Scrutiny Committee:

ANNUAL REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS TO OMBUDSMAN 2012 - 2013**Report of the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial & Corporate Services****1. Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of the number and outcome of complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2012-13. To inform Members of the increased transparency within the Ombudsman service.

2. Description of Decision

Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the Ombudsman's annual review and in particular that there were no findings of maladministration against the council for the municipal year 2012-13.

3. Background

The Local Government Ombudsman has issued her tenth annual review to the council, see Appendix 1 attached. The Ombudsman's office made significant changes to their business processes for 2012 -13. In this review the Ombudsman has simply sent councils one figure – the number of complaints they have *received* during the year 2012 -13. This is not the same as the same as the number of complaints they have made decisions on or indeed complaints they have sent on to the council. Previous reviews have contained a detailed breakdown of statistics and analysis.

4. Current Position

4.1 The Ombudsman reports that 39 complaints were *received* by her for Sunderland. The average for Metropolitan councils is 49.

4.2 Last year the Ombudsman made decisions on 32 complaints. Of all the complaints considered, in only one did the Ombudsman recommend the council make an amendment. The complaint was a Children's Services statutory complaint and concerned the delay in carrying out a Core Assessment as part of a Child Protection enquiry. Whilst the council had upheld the complaint, the Ombudsman felt the compensation of £500 offered was too low and proposed this be increased to £2000.

In all other complaints the Ombudsman made no recommendations for alternative outcomes or compensation to that that the council had made during its in house consideration of the complaints.

5. Breakdown of Complaints by Directorate

City Services (Apr-Sept)	HH&AS	Children's Services	Commercial & Corp Services	OCX	Multi HH&AS & City Services	Total
2	6	11	4	8	1	32

6. Publishing of Decisions

From April 2013 to increase transparency and awareness of the complaints her office handles, the Ombudsman has published all final decisions on complaints. These are anonymised to protect the identities of complainants.

7. Background Papers

There are no background papers