



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date Written	7 th November 2019
Report Author	Carys Kennedy/Gavin McPherson
Service Area	Legal
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	15 th November 2019

To: *Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen*

OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2018/19

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Committee agreed at its meeting on the 27th November 2015 that part of its regular work programme would include a consideration of the Annual Report/Annual Letter of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- 1.2 The Annual Report is attached at Appendix A which provides a summary of the work of the Ombudsman and the complaint data in relation to this Authority and where appropriate comparing this Authority to others across Wales. This information is provided to assist our own reviews of our complaint handling service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- 2.1 The Committee notes and debates the information contained within the Ombudsman's Annual letter.
- 2.2 An information report be scheduled to a future Council meeting to report on the outcomes in the Ombudsman's Annual Letter.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This information is to make members aware of the changes that have been implemented under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. This act has significantly increased the reach of the Ombudsman to act on referrals by telephone rather than in writing and also to start investigations when he deems that there is public interest in doing so.

3.2 Members will note that during the period reported the Ombudsman received 15 complaints where we have previously averaged around 17. It can also be considered from the data that as an authority we have a lower than average number of referrals indicating that our complaints structure is robust and functioning well. Also it is noted that of the 15 complaints made there were none that warranted investigation by the Ombudsman.

3.3 This sets out the split of the complaints by service area.

Table C (Page4)

3.3.1 This breakdown outlines the complaints received by the Ombudsman by their outcome. It also contains an adjustment against the greater population of Wales and compares this against previous year's figures. Of note is figure that nearly 50% of Ombudsman referrals were considered by the Ombudsman to be premature and that no complaints were upheld by the Ombudsman which is a significant decrease on previous years.

Table D (Page 5)

3.3.2 This sets out the number of complaints requiring the Ombudsman's intervention against the number of complaints that were closed. You will note that 0% of the authority's Ombudsman complaints resulted in any intervention by the Ombudsman, something that only ourselves and Monmouthshire Council achieved.

Table E (page 6)

3.3.3 This sets out a breakdown of all code of conduct complaints against Councillors during 2018/2019. You will note that there were only two referrals down from seven the previous year.

4.0 DECISION REQUIRED

4.1. Committee is asked to consider the information provided and identify whether there are any issues of concern that need to be highlighted for further action and agree that a report should be provided to Council providing this information from the Ombudsman.

CARYS KENNEDY
MONITORING OFFICER

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2018/19	7 th August 2019	Legal Department
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.