

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 September 2024

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER

To set out the annual report of the Ombudsman regarding complaints received and dealt with over the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

1.1 The Annual Letter

1.1.1 Each year, the Ombudsman provides the Borough Council with a report of the formal complaints he has dealt with and the outcomes of those complaints. This report covers the period for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

1.1.2 The Ombudsman received 12 formal complaints over that period. The outcomes were as follows:

Complaints decided – 14 (some of these relate to complaints made prior to 1 April 2023 but decided during the 23/24 period)

Complaints upheld – 2

Not upheld – 1

Complaints referred back for local resolution – 1

Complaints closed after initial enquiries – 10

Complaints incomplete/invalid – 0

Advice given – 0

1.1.3 A copy of the Ombudsman's letter is attached at **Annex 1**, together with details of the complaints at **Annex 2**.

1.1.4 The 2 complaints upheld by the Ombudsman relate to Planning Services and Housing Services.

- 1.1.5 In both of the complaints upheld by the Ombudsman, the Borough Council remedied the matter complained of in accordance with the recommendations of the Ombudsman.
- 1.1.6 Officers are currently reviewing the Council's approach to complaint handling in light of the new Complaint Handling Code published by the Ombudsman in February 2024. As part of this review consideration will be given to how the Council should approach the remedying of complaints in circumstances where it is accepted that the Council is at fault, including the payment of compensation in appropriate cases. This will help in ensuring that complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity and without reference to the Ombudsman

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 None

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 None

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Policy Considerations

- 1.5.1 N/A

Background papers:

contact: Damian Roberts

Nil

Damian Roberts
Chief Executive