

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Standards Committee

17 November 2023

TITLE:	Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Charlotte Atkins – Portfolio Holder for Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Karen Lomas - Head of Customer Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter

1. Reason for the Report

1.1 To advise members of the content of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the period April 2022 – March 2023.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee notes the content of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter (included at Appendix A).

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter summarises complaints and enquiries received by it in relation to the Council. The letters are published on the Ombudsman's website together with specimen data used to inform the Ombudsman's Annual Report.

3.2 In 2022/23 the Ombudsman received **2** new enquiries or complaints in relation to the Council, compared with **7** in the previous year. Detail of the decisions made and investigated complaints in 2022/23 are summarised as follows:

Service Area	Details of Complaint/Ombudsman's comments	Finding
Upheld (0)		
Not upheld (1)		
Closed after initial enquiries (1)		
22 007 440 <u>Closed after initial enquiries</u> Planning Applications	We will not investigate this complaint about the Council granting planning permission for a new dwelling opposite the complainant's home. This is because the complaint does not meet the tests in our Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. The complaint appears to be late, there is not enough evidence of fault causing significant injustice to the complainant, and we cannot achieve the outcome he is seeking.	We will not investigate Mr X's complaint because it appears to be late, there is not enough evidence of fault causing him a significant injustice, and we cannot achieve the outcome he is seeking.
21 014 107 <u>Not Upheld</u> Planning Applications	Mrs X complains the Council failed to properly consider a planning application submitted by her neighbour. We found there was no fault by the Council.	There was no fault by the Council. I have now completed my investigation and closed my file.
Referred back for local resolution (0)		

3.3 A copy of the Ombudsman's letter is attached as Appendix A to this report.

3.4 Members may also wish to note that the small number of complaints reaching the Ombudsman is set against a background of **92** complaints received by the Council in the period in question, which helps to illustrate the strength of the Council's process in ensuring that complaints are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

3.5 Below is a table showing Local Government Ombudsman figures for 13 Local Authorities, similar in nature to the Council. The average for upheld complaints across the 13 Authorities is **60%**.

	Complaints and enquiries received 2022/23		Figures for Upheld / Not upheld (detailed investigations carried out)			
			Decisions made 2022/23	Upheld	Not upheld	Total
Cannock Chase	8	2	2	0	2	100%
Castle Point	1	0	0	0	0	0%
Chorley	5	0	1	0	1	100%
Fenland	7	3	0	3	3	0%

	Complaints and enquiries received 2022/23		Figures for Upheld / Not upheld (detailed investigations carried out)			
			Decisions made 2022/23	Upheld	Not upheld	Total
Forest of Dean	4	1	1	0	1	100%
High Peak Borough Council	7	4	3	1	4	75%
Hinckley & Bosworth	6	1	0	1	0	0%
Kettering	1	1	0	1	0	0%
Rugby	7	2	1	1	2	50%
Selby	5	0	0	0	0	0%
South Derbyshire	5	2	1	1	2	50%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2	1	0	1	0	0%
Wyre Forest	1	0	0	0	0	0%

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Ensure our services are easily available to all our residents in the appropriate channels and provided 'right first time'.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 There are none to consider

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Contact details

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