

SUBJECT:	PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2021/22
MEETING:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
DATE:	24 NOVEMBER 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose is to fulfil the expectation of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee.

The report was presented to Cabinet on 19 October 2022. They noted the contents of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and agreed that the authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, access training for staff and provide the PSOW with complaints data. We have also fully implemented the PSOW's model complaints policy. The PSOW's annual letter has also been presented to the Standards Committee held on 10 October 2022.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 Governance and Audit Committee note the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and inform the PSOW of their considerations and any proposed actions. The PSOW has been informed that due to the scheduling of meetings there would be a delay in responding to them by their respective date. They accepted this.
- 2.2 That the authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, access training for staff and provide the PSOW with complaints data. We have also fully implemented the PSOW's model complaints policy.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales sends every Council an annual letter which provides a summary of the complaints received and investigated. This compares the number of complaints against the local authority which were received and investigated by the PSOW during 2021/22, with the local authority average during the same period.
- 3.2 The PSOW annual letter provides:

- a breakdown of the number of complaints about the local authority broken down into subject categories.
- shows the complaint outcomes for the local authority and the volume and proportion that each outcome represents for the local authority.
- the numbers and percentages of cases received in which an intervention has occurred.
- a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against councillors.
- a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against town or community councils.

3.3 The PSOW received 20 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council. This is the same number they received in the previous year. One complaint was investigated by them which is the same as the previous year. Comparisons are shown below, noting that the categories used by the commissioner differ between years.

Complaints received by subject: (PSOW definition)	Complaints Received	
	21/22	20/21
Adult Social Services	1	0
Children Social Services	6	3
Complaints handling	3	3
Environment and Environmental health	2	1
Finance and Taxation	1	0
Housing	1	0
Planning and Building Control	6	6
Roads and transport	0	3
Community Facilities, Recreation & Leisure	0	1
Covid 19	0	1
Other	0	2

PSOW Comparison of complaint outcomes

Local Authority	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early resolution/voluntary settlement	Discontinued	Other report – not upheld	Other report – upheld in whole or in part	Public interest reports
Monmouthshire	5	10	4	2	0	0	0	0

There was one complaint where the PSOW intervened.

Code of Conduct complaints

There were two complaints that were closed with no evidence of breach.

Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints

There were no complaints.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

This report provides feedback information from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The report does not seek to divert from the Council's corporate priorities and the continued delivery of the wide range of services provided through the Council to the public. As the report deals solely with feedback information, a Future Generations and Equality Impact Assessment is not considered appropriate in this instance.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

This section is not relevant as the work of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is outside of our control.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

We will continue to work with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales office to resolve as many issues as possible at an early stage and monitor the number of complaints the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales receives and deals with.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) role is to consider complaints about public services providers in Wales and to consider complaints that members of local authorities have broken the Code of Conduct. The PSOW has requested that Cabinet considers the complaints that the PSOW has received.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are currently no extra resource costs identified.

9 CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2021/22

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