

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER
2021/22**

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 19 OCTOBER 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.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet 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.
- 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 And 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. This element of the letter will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next appropriate meeting.

- 3.4 Code of Conduct complaints. There were two complaints regarding the County Council that were closed with no evidence of breach. There were no Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints.
- 3.5 This report and the PSOW Annual letter 2021/22 will also be presented to the Standards Committee.

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

4.1 This report provides feedback information from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and no evaluation of that work is required.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 The letter has to be presented to Cabinet. There is no options appraisal.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 MCC will continue to work with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on all matters.

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

11. AUTHOR

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