

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER
2022/23**

MEETING: GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2023

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 Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 Governance and Audit Committee note the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and advise the Ombudsman of any considerations and recommendations that are made as a result.

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 2022/23, 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 23 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council. This is 3 more than they received in the previous year. They did not investigate any complaints although they intervened in one complaint where an early resolution was agreed. Comparisons are shown below, noting that the categories used by the commissioner differ between years.

Complaints received by subject: (PSOW definition)	Complaints Received	
	22//23	21/22
Adult Social Services	2	1
Children Social Services	3	6
Complaints handling	3	3
Environment and Environmental health	2	2
Finance and Taxation	0	1
Housing	2	1
Planning and Building Control	5	6
Roads and transport	4	0
Community Facilities, Recreation & Leisure	0	0
Covid 19	0	0
Other	2	0

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	6	1	0	0	0	0

There was one complaint where the PSOW intervened and an early resolution sought and agreed.

Code of Conduct complaints

There was one complaint that was discontinued.

Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints

There was 5 complaints where it was decided not to investigate.

3.4 This report and the PSOW Annual letter 2022/23 will also be presented to the Standards Committee.

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 2022/23

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