

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers
Title	Local Government Ombudsman – Annual Review 2014/2015		282213
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report request the Cabinet to note the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review for 2014/2015

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To note the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter for 2014/2015.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To inform the Cabinet of the number of complaints received by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to Colchester during 2014/2015.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 No alternative options are presented.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Local Government Ombudsman issues an Annual Review Letter to each local authority. The Annual Review Letter for Colchester for the year ending 31 March 2015 is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 It is worth noting that anyone can choose to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. Accordingly, the number of complaints is not an indicator of performance or level of customer service. In most instances there was no case to answer. The Local Government Ombudsman will normally insist that the Council has the opportunity to resolve the complaint locally through its own complaints procedure before commencing its own investigation.
- 4.3 The Governance Committee has an overview of Local Government Ombudsman investigations and the contents of the Annual Review will be reported to the Committee in due course.

5. Key Headlines

- 5.1 There were no findings of maladministration against the Council and no formal reports were issued.
- 5.2 In 2014 /15 the Council received 219,000 customer contacts. The Local Government Ombudsman in the same period received 30 complaints and enquires in relation to how

the Council had dealt with its customers. This is an increase from the previous year's figure of 22.

5.3 The Local Government Ombudsman made 30 decisions. Of which:

- 19 were referred back for local resolution,
(Referred back to the Council to enable it to deal with the complaint via its own complaint procedures)
- 6 were closed after initial enquiries,
- 4 advice given,
- 1 upheld.
(The Local Government Ombudsman decided that the Council had been at fault in how it acted and the fault may or may not have caused injustice to the complainant, or where the Council accepted that it needed to remedy the complaint before the Local Government Ombudsman made a finding on fault).

5.4 The case that was upheld the Local Government Ombudsman found that the Council had delayed dealing with retrospective planning applications however this did not cause any injustice to the complainant as the Council had made it clear from the outset what the likely outcome of the applications would be.

6. Financial Considerations

6.1 No direct implications other than mentioned in this report.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The lessons learnt from complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman link in with our Strategic Plan aims to be efficient accessible, customer focused and always looking to improve. Having an effective complaints process helps us to achieve the Strategic Plan's themes of a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming Borough.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

8.1 No direct implications.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 Details of the Annual Review Letter are published on the Local Government Ombudsman's website and will also be published on the Council's website.

10. Consultation, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management Implications

10.1 No direct implications.