

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

INFORMATION REPORT TO CABINET

19 MARCH 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2017-2018

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2017-2018 to Cabinet.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales reports annually on the number of complaints against public bodies received by its office.
- 3.2 The number of complaints against the Authority decreased in the period 2017-2018 by 10% from 44 to 40. There were no Public Interest reports against the Authority in this period and only 1 case was taken forward for investigation. Complaints regarding Children's Social Services have halved from 12 to 6 in the past year. Complaints regarding Environment and Environmental Health have increased from 3 to 9.
- 3.3 A total of 4 Code of Conduct complaints against the Authority were received by the Ombudsman's Office in the same period and these are reported on in Section E of the Appendix. Overall the number of Code of Conduct complaints increased by 14% in the past year, this is attributed to a 33% increase in Code of Conduct complaints involving Community Councils. Many of these complaints have arisen following changes in the membership of councils. 42% of Code of Conduct complaints received were with regards to the promotion of equality and respect, 19% were with regards to disclosure and registration of interests and 16% were with regards to integrity.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 **Appendix A** provides the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2017-2018.
- 4.2 A copy of the Annual Letter was presented to the Standards Committee on 7 March 2019 for information.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework or the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the Ombudsman's Annual Letter attached as **Appendix A**.

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4 March 2019

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Background documents: None