

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## INFORMATION REPORT TO CABINET

17 SEPTEMBER 2019

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

#### OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2018-2019

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2018-2019 to Cabinet.

#### 2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priority

- 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 Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is independent of all government bodies and has legal powers to investigate complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales. They also investigate complaints that Members of local government bodies have breached their authority's Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 The PSOW reports annually on the number of complaints against public bodies received by its office.
- 3.3 The Complaints Officer is the Contact Officer for the PSOW and the Monitoring Officer is responsible for liaising with the PSOW regarding Member Code of Conduct complaints.

#### 4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 **Appendix A** provides the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2018-2019.
- 4.2 The number of complaints against the Authority decreased in the period 2018-2019 from 40 in 2017-18 to 33 in 2018-19. This is against a local authority average adjusted for population distribution of 41. None of the complaints against the Authority proceeded to investigation. The PSOW intervened in 6 of these cases. Children's Services attracted the largest number of complaints at 7 and Roads and Transport the least with 1.
- 4.3 One Code of Conduct complaint against the Authority's Councillors was received by the Ombudsman's Office in this period and was closed after initial consideration. 17

Code of Conduct complaints were received against Town and Community Councils in Bridgend County and all were closed after initial consideration.

## **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. As the report is for noting only, it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 The PSOW has the legal power to require authorities to make payments to complainants where they have suffered financial loss or in compensation for distress and inconvenience.

## **9. Recommendation**

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

Kelly Watson  
Head of Legal and Regulatory Services  
9 September 2019

**Contact officer:** Charlotte Branford  
Information and Data Protection Officer

**Telephone:** (01656) 643565

**Email:** Charlotte.Branford@bridgend.gov.uk

**Postal address:** Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

**Background documents:** None