

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	OMUBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2023-2024
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The Annual Letter must be presented to Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Cabinet to note the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The PSOW reports annually on the number of complaints against public bodies received by its office.
- 2.3 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.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 **Appendix A** provides the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2023-2024.
- 3.2 The number of complaints against the Authority for the period 2023-2024 was 59 compared with 55 in 2022-2023. The figure for 2023-2024 represents 0.41 complaints received per 1000 residents. Childrens Social Services and Planning / Building Control attracted the largest number of complaints. 10 cases were out of jurisdiction,

23 were premature, 18 were closed after initial consideration, 8 were settled by working with the Ombudsman for early resolution. No complaints proceeded to investigation.

- 3.3 15 Code of Conduct complaints against the Authority's Councillors were received by the Ombudsman's Office in this period of which 14 were not investigated and 1 was deemed no action necessary. 18 Code of Conduct complaints were received against Town and Community Councils in Bridgend County 4 of which were referred to the Standards Committee, 1 of which a decision was taken not to investigate, and the remainder were deemed no action necessary.
- 3.4 The Complaints Standards Authority publishes datasets on complaints handled by local authorities. These datasets are published on the Ombudsman's website and on the Council's website. This data shows that last year, 14% of the Council's complaints were referred to PSOW.
- 3.5 The Annual letter was also presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 28 November 2024. The Committee requested that a further report be presented to them in January 2025 regarding the Authority's compliance performance and the future recording of compliments.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 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 well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2023-2024.

Background documents:

None