

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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MEETING: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2007

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS

REPORT FROM: MONITORING OFFICER

CONTACT OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

TYPE OF DECISION: COMMITTEE

REPORT STATUS: OPEN

PURPOSE/SUMMARY: To present to Members information on Ombudsman complaints received during 2006 and 2007.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons): The Committee is asked to note the report.

IMPLICATIONS -

Financial Implications and Risk Considerations

There are no such implications arising from this report

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:

Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes ✓ No

Are there any legal implications? Yes No ✓

Considered by Monitoring Officer: Yes ✓

Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government: N/A

Staffing/ICT/Property: N/A

Wards Affected: N/A

Scrutiny Interest: N/A

TRACKING/PROCESS**DIRECTOR: LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
YES	NO	NO	NO
Scrutiny Panel	Executive	Committee	Council
NO	NO	YES	NO

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 At its last meeting, the Committee considered statistics supplied by the Ombudsman for 2006/2007 which included the following information:-

- 46 complaints has been receiving split up as follows against subject area:-

○ Adult Care Services	-	4
○ Benefits	-	6
○ Children and Family Services	-	4
○ Education	-	6
○ Housing	-	9
○ Other	-	10
○ Planning and Building Control	-	3
○ Public Finance	-	2
○ Social Services : Other	-	0
○ Transport & Highways	-	2

- Bury's average response time in respect of first enquiries was 32.5 against a target of 28 days.

1.2. In noting the information the Committee asked for the following information at its next meeting:-

- 1) More details of the nature of complaints received and the length of time taken to deal with those complaints.
- 2) Information on decisions against subject area, as well as against outcome.

2.0 INFORMATION AGAINST SUBJECT AREA

2.1 At the last meeting, information for 2006/2007 was reported against "Decisions" as follows:-

MI Reps	LS	M Reps	NM Reps	No Mal	Omb Disc	Outside Jurisdiction	Premature Complaints	Total Exc Premature
0	7	0	0	23	1	6	19	37

Overall Total = 56

2.2 The Ombudsman has supplied a breakdown of this information against service area as follows:-

	LS	No Mal	Omb disc	Outside Jurisdiction	Premature Complaints	Total
Adult Care Services	1	2	0	0	0	3
Benefits	1	0	1	0	2	4
Children and Family Services	1	1	0	0	3	5
Education	0	2	0	0	2	4
Housing	1	2	0	1	3	7
Other	1	2	0	3	3	9
Planning & Building Control	0	11	0	1	1	13
Public Finance	0	1	0	0	2	3
Transport and highways	2	0	0	1	1	4
Total	7	21	1	6	17	52

3.0. BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS

3.1. In submitting information on complaints, the Ombudsman pointed out that the number of complaints received will be different to the number of complaints determined as some complaints are made in one year and decided in the next.

3.2. In order to give members more detailed information on complaints received, set out below is information for the calendar year 2006 and the calendar year 2007.

3.3. Ombudsman Complaints 2006

Complainant	Service	Days Taken
DB	Education & Culture	22
KR	EDS (Planning)	24
GG	Dir of F & E G	14
DK	Planning	22
GW	Children's Services	29
PS	Borough Engineer's	51
JM	Strategic Housing	22
SC	Chief Exec's/Finance & E-Gov	34
AB	Borough Engineer's	29
PR	Social Services	34
SM	STH	35
SD	Adult Care Services	27
SK	EDS	34

JS	STH	25
JEW	F & EG (Rev & Ben)	41
SO	School Admissions	6 *

Response Time is 14 days.

3.4. Ombudsman Complaints 2007

Complainant	Service	Days Taken
AW	L & DS (Jayne Hammond)	28
BM	Children's Services	35
DG	F & EG (Revs and Bens)	27
TM	EDS	15
CO	EDS	27
VS	STH	28
CT	EDS (Planning)	24
AH	Legal/STH	23
DA	Dems/Educ Admissions	14 *
JJ	STH	24
BJB	STH	35
RB	EDS	27
PH	STH	40
CH	Revs & Benefits	56

* Response Time is 14 days.

- 3.5. As can be seen from these figures, certain complaints take longer to respond to and this affects the average. Some explanatory information on cases taking 40 or more days is given below.

2006

PS : Two weeks lost through officer leave.

JEW : Complex case involving benefits.

2007

PH : Six Town Housing achieved local solution which was satisfactory to Tenant and Ombudsman.

CH : Complaint dated 9 January 2007 but received by email on 14 February 2007.

- 3.6. The Ombudsman's Office has recently started to forward some complaints electronically which is helpful in moving complaints on quickly. In addition, Ombudsman Complaints on Bury will in the future be logged on a computerised system which enable more effective tracking.

List of Background Papers: Nil

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