

Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor David Henderson, Leader of the Council, and Clare James, Corporate Director Resources	Cabinet	7 September 2022

Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2022

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To consider the Annual Review letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) for 2021/22, attached at Appendix A.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Learn from the outcome of complaints made to the LGO to improve our services and underpin effective working relationships between the council and the LGO's office.
- 2.2 Support greater transparency and democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and ensure effective local accountability of public services

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the comments made by the LGO in the Annual Review Letter.

4. Background

- 4.1 This annual review provides a summary of statistics on the complaints made to the LGO about Wyre for the year ended 31 March 2022. The data that the LGO has provided shows the complaints and enquiries they have received, along with the decisions they have made and Wyre's compliance with recommendations during the period.
- 4.2 The number of complaints, taken alone, is not necessarily a reliable indicator of an authority's performance. The volume of complaints should be considered alongside the uphold rate (how often the LGO found fault when they investigated a complaint) and statistics that indicate Wyre's willingness to accept fault and put things right when they go wrong. The LGO also provide a figure for the number of cases where the authority provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached them and statistics about the authority's compliance with recommendations they

have made; both of which offer a more comprehensive and insightful view of Wyre’s approach to complaint handling.

4.3 The LGO have published its annual data for all authorities on their website, alongside its annual review of local government complaints. This includes data on authorities’ compliance with the LGO’s recommendations. Our data was uploaded to the LGO’s interactive map, [Your council’s performance](#), along with a copy of the LGO’s letter and its Review of Local Government Complaints. This collated data supports the scrutiny of local services.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 During the year the LGO Advice Team received 13 complaints and enquiries about the council in the 12 months up to 31 March 2022. This is an increase of three complaints when compared to those received by the LGO in 2020/21.

5.2 The number of decisions made in the year will not necessarily be the same as the number of complaints received by the LGO Advice Team because some complaints decided in 2021/22 will have been received in the previous year, and some sent to the Investigative Team during 2021/22 will be ongoing. However 13 decisions were made in total.

5.3 Two complaints were referred back for local resolution.

5.4 Nine complaints were closed after initial enquiries and they related to the following service areas:

Planning and Development	5
Benefits and Council Tax	1
Corporate and Other services	1
Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation	2

5.5 One complaint had advice given, but the case had previously been considered and decided.

5.6 One case was Upheld:

Nature of Complaint	Service Area	Decision
Complaint that there had been delays by the Council in taking enforcement action over housing disrepair and ensuring the works are completed within a reasonable timescale.	Housing	Upheld. There was fault by the Council which caused injustice. There was fault by the Council as it mistakenly closed a complaint about housing disrepair. The Council’s apology and change in procedures remedies the injustice to Miss X.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	On occasion the Local Government Ombudsman may recommend that a payment is made to a complainant to compensate for any injustice they have experienced. No payments were made in 2021/22.
Legal	None arising directly from the report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no	email	date
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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection

List of appendices

Appendix A – LGO Annual Review Letter to Wyre BC for the period ending 31/03/2022