

# REPORT TO GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

**REPORT NO:** LDS108

**DATE:** 26 September 2013

<b>TITLE:</b>	OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2012/2013	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Not applicable	
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Councillor Paul Carpenter – Portfolio Holder for Governance and Communication	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Lucy Youles Head of Legal and Democratic Services <a href="mailto:l.youles@southkesteven.gov.uk">l.youles@southkesteven.gov.uk</a> Tel:01476 406105	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS:</b>  Equality and Diversity	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below  Not applicable	Full impact assessment Required: Not applicable
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None	

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 It is recommended the Governance and Audit Committee note the contents of Ombudsman Annual Review Letter for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 which is attached to this report at Appendix A.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee of the contents of the Ombudsman Annual Review Letter. Members should note the change in format of the Review Letter. Previous review letters have given details of the types of complaints, numbers of premature complaints and details of the time taken to respond to investigations. This information is no longer held by the Ombudsman and a fact sheet of response to queries about this is attached at Appendix B

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Ombudsman has confirmed a total of 6 complaints have been made about this Council for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. This figure does not include premature complaints or enquiries. I can confirm that a further 5 premature complaints were referred to the Council to be dealt with through our complaints process. We are not aware that any of those complaints have subsequently been referred to the Ombudsman for investigation. This compares favourably with previous years' complaints when the total number of complaints investigated and premature complaints has been in the high teens.
- 3.2 We are not aware of any delayed responses to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman does apply strict time limits to responses and will inform us if they encounter any delay.
- 3.2 Of the 6 complaints investigated by the Ombudsman, 3 related to planning matters, 1 related to building control, 1 to a housing matter and 1 to revenues and benefits. No findings of maladministration were made. Investigations were discontinued or findings of "outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction" were made.

## **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 No other options have been considered in respect of the Annual Review Letter. Members may wish to comment on the content of the Annual Review Letter for feedback to the Ombudsman.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no resource implications relating to this report.

## **6. RISK AND MITIGATION**

- 6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report. No significant risks were identified.

## **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS**

7.1 Equality impact analysis not required

**8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No crime and disorder implications

**9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

10.1 There are no legal or democratic implications arising from this report.

**11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES**

11.1 None relevant.

**12. Appendices**

- Appendix A - LGO Annual Review Letter 2012/2013
- Appendix B - Ombudsman response to queries about the content of the review letter.