



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Governance and Audit Committee

19 November 2020

Report of: Councillor Annie Mason
Cabinet Member for Communities



Local Government Ombudsman Annual Reports 2019/2020

This report provides the annual review of complaints received and decisions made from the Local Government Ombudsman Letter for 2019/2020

Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Administrative	Administrative	All Wards

Reviewed by:	Ken Lyon, Assistant Chief Executive	3 November 2020
Approved by:	Gary Smith, Strategic Director, Commercial & Operations	3 November 2020
Signed off by:	Councillor Annie Mason, Cabinet Member for Communities	4 November 2020

Recommendation to the decision maker

- 1) **It is recommended that the Governance and Audit Committee notes the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, which is attached to this report as Appendix 1.**
- 2) **It is recommended that a report be presented to a future Governance and Audit Committee on the complaint themes and the resulting changes to service delivery.**

1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 Each year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman produces an Annual Review Letter for local authorities detailing the number and type of complaints received and decisions made relating to each authority. The annual review letter for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 relating to South Kesteven District Council is attached to this report in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The statistics provided within the Annual Review Letter set out in the attached Appendix show that for the year up to 31 March 2020, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) recorded 14 complaints received (compared to 15 last year) relating to services provided by this Council.
- 1.3 The LGO reviewed a total of 17 complaints during the period of the Annual Review Letter, 3 were closed after initial enquiries, 1 decision was upheld and referred with guidance to the Council for local resolution; 4 were not upheld; 2 were closed after advice given by the LGO as they impacted the whole population while the remaining 7 were referred back for local resolution before the LGO would investigate.
- 1.4 The 14 complaints received 5 related to Planning and Development, 4 related to Environmental Services and Public Protection, 2 related to Housing, 1 related to Council Tax, 1 related to Adult Care and 1 related to Corporate and other services.
- 1.5 The 20% upheld rate (1 out of 5 investigations) is versus 0% last year and compares to an average of 45% in similar authorities. The compliance of local authorities to make and monitor LGO recommendations is now included in the data for the annual review and is published for authorities, included in the link provided in the background paper.
- 1.6 The 1 upheld decision refers to the way SKDC handled the initial investigation of an antisocial behaviour complaint. Thereafter, SKDC carried out a proportionate, evidence-based inquiry into the concerns. However, SKDC did not provide a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

The early stages had not been conducted in a timely or appropriate way. As a result of the councils review and the Ombudsman's findings, the team concerned were all re-briefed on the correct processes. The specific issue of lack of integration of records was rectified with a centralised control log with progress tracking and ownership. The log is maintained by a controller who also updates progress, then circulates the updates across the teams for review and action, removing a single point of failure and improving awareness and communication across interdependent teams.

2 Available Options Considered

- 2.1 No other options considered as part of this report

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Head of Finance

4 Legal and Governance Implications

- 4.1 The low number of LGO complaints and findings against the Council are to be welcomed, and it is strongly recommended that this committee, or FEDCO receives regular reporting

on complaints and outcomes, so that the Council learns from complaints to improve service delivery.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Shahin Ismail, Director of Law and Governance

5 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

5.1 None

6 Risk and Mitigation

6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and no high risks were identified.

7 Community Safety Implications

7.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report

8 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

The report has a neutral carbon impact.

9 Background Papers

9.1 <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/south-kesteven-district-council/statistics>

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 LGO Annual Review Letter 2019/20

Report Timeline:	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	Not applicable
	Previously Considered by: Governance and Audit Committee	18 December 2019
	Final Decision date	Not applicable