

COMPLAINTS**(Report by the Director of Central Services)****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an analysis of internal complaints and a summary of complaints determined by the Local Government Ombudsman.

2. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

- 2.1 The Council's internal complaints system summarises complaints into six categories as follows:-

- ◆ action of employee;
- ◆ council policy;
- ◆ council procedures;
- ◆ equality of service;
- ◆ failure to respond; and
- ◆ service delivery.

- 2.2 The table attached at Annex A provides an analysis of complaints by complaint reason, the Division involved and results compared with the previous year.

- 2.3 Previously complaints have only been logged following a written submission by a complainant. The call centre has been in operation since September 2005 and can now also capture verbal complaints in relation to services which have been transferred to the call centre. These complaints predominantly relate to the Operations Division and in May 2006 50 complaints were received out of 1800 service requests.

- 2.4 The Operations Division also administers a separate monitoring system 'Heat' and an analysis of the complaints submitted for 2005/06 are detailed below. Details of service requests have not been included.

Complaint	2005/06
Excess refuse left and info tag attached to bin	3
Missed collection on regular basis	4
Large excess of refuse piling up in neighbours garden	2
Non-delivery of grey/green bins	1
Problems with waste disposal system at flats – excess refuse	1
Commercial premises using domestic refuse service	1
Return point of refuse bins after collection	1
Total	13

3. SUMMARY OF OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

3.1 The Local Government Ombudsman Service has published the following provisional statistics for complaints determined against the District Council in the year 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006 compared with previous years.

Formal report finding maladministration causing injustice

Decisions	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Maladministration causing injustice	0	0	0
Complaints settled locally	0	0	5
Maladministration causing no injustice	0	0	0
No maladministration	0	0	0
No, or insufficient, evidence of maladministration	3	8	9
Ombudsman's Discretion	1	1	1
Outside LGO's jurisdiction	1	3	0
Premature complaints	4	4	2
Total excluding premature	5	12	15
Total	9	16	17

3.2 A comparison of complaints received by subject area provides the following picture in relation to District Council services including premature complaints. The Ombudsman does not normally consider a complaint unless a Council has had the opportunity to deal with the complaint itself. So if someone complains to the Ombudsman without having taken the matter up with a Council the Ombudsman will usually refer it back to the Council as a 'premature complaint' to see if the Council can itself resolve the matter.

Subject Area	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Highways	5	2	2
Housing (not including HB)	0	4	0
Housing Benefit	3	1	0
Local Taxation	0	4	1
Planning	4	8	6
Other	0	3	3
Total	12	22	12

3.3 These figures are currently based upon provisional end-of-year statistics supplied by the Ombudsman. The Council has not yet received the Annual Letter.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Panel are invited to note the contents of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Ombudsman Annual Report 2001/02 – 2004/05
Provisional Complaint Statistics 2005/06

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Annex A

Complaint Reason	Division Involved 2004/05 and action	Division involved 1/4/06 to date and action
Action of Employee	2 Development Control (2 SI) 8 Council Tax (7 NAT and 1 RTC) 1 Housing (NAT) 1 Public Health 1 Benefits (FT) 1 Admin - Ops	1 Housing (NAT) 1 Public Health
Council Policy	1 Housing (NAT) 3 Benefits (SI) (NAT) 2 Council Tax (2 NAT)	
Council Procedures	3 Benefits (2 SI) (CIP) 5 Council Tax (4 NAT) (FT) 1 Business Rates (NAT) 1 Housing (SI) 1 Development Control	2 Development Control (NAT) 1 Benefits 1 Council Tax (NAT)
Equality of Service	2 Development Control (2 NAT) 1 Operational (SI)	
Failure to Respond	1 Housing (NAT) 2 Benefits 1 Development Control (SI)	
Service Delivery	4 Development Control (3 NAT) 4 Council Tax (4 NAT) 1 Highways 1 Business Rates 1 Operational 1 Planning Policy 1 Housing (SI) 2 IT	
Total	53	6

KEY:

NAT	No Action Taken
CIP	Change in Procedures
SI	Staff Instruction
RTC	Referral to Contractor
CIS	Change in Service
FT	Formal Training