

AUDIT COMMITTEE 28 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of paper:	Ombudsman Annual Letter	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Mark Gannon Director of Customer Access	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Lynne North Customer Liaison Officer Lynne.north@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:		
Recommendation(s):		
1	Councillors are asked to note the contents of this report	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Complaints are an important feedback mechanism for us to help influence service Improvement and therefore to increase citizen satisfaction.

This year the annual letter is in a different format again to last year as the LGO have undergone a lot of changes. To enable Councillors and officers to further understand the statistics please see the tables in Appendices 1-4. When looking at our performance alongside other Core Cities we are again this year the second best performing authority.

This is a demonstration that we are improving year on year our communications with the LGO. This year we have again maintained our response rates worked with the LGO in a timely manner.

We continue to have a good working relationship with the LGO teams which is one of the tools which enables us to provide a better service to the citizens of Nottingham.

We have now been using the Have Your Say corporate system for recording compliments, comments & complaints for 2 years, which is giving us invaluable information of how to improve our services and responses to our citizens although there are further opportunities to understand the data from this key feedback mechanism so we can continue to identify service improvement opportunities.

2. **BACKGROUND**

Nottingham City Council is still the responsible body for complaints about housing provided by Nottingham City Homes and their figures are included in our Annual Letter. The Ombudsman service has now been split into two separate services of responsibility; one covering housing and one section cover all other cases

3. **BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

4. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

LGO Annual Letter.

Appendix One: LGO Letter

7 July 2014

By email

Mr Ian Curryer
Chief Executive
Nottingham City Council

Local Government
OMBUDSMAN

Dear Mr Ian Curryer

Annual Review Letter 2014

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2014. This is the first full year of recording complaints under our new business model so the figures will not be directly comparable to previous years. This year's statistics can be found in the table attached.

A summary of complaint statistics for every local authority in England will also be included in a new yearly report on local government complaint handling. This will be published alongside our annual review letters on 15 July. This approach is in response to feedback from councils who told us that they want to be able to compare their performance on complaints against their peers.

For the first time this year we are also sending a copy of each annual review letter to the leader of the council as well as to the chief executive. We hope this will help to support greater democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and ensure effective local accountability of public services. In the future we will also send a copy of any published Ombudsman report to the leader of the council as well as the chief executive.

Developments at the Local Government Ombudsman

At the end of March Anne Seex retired as my fellow Local Government Ombudsman. Following an independent review of the governance of the LGO last year the Government has committed to formalising a single ombudsman structure at LGO, and to strengthen our governance, when parliamentary time allows. I welcome these changes and have begun the process of strengthening our governance by inviting the independent Chairs of our Audit and Remuneration Committees to join our board, the Commission for Administration in England. We have also recruited a further independent advisory member.

Future for local accountability

There has been much discussion in Parliament and elsewhere about the effectiveness of complaints handling in the public sector and the role of ombudsmen. I have supported the creation of a single ombudsman for all public services in England. I consider this is

the best way to deliver a system of redress that is accessible for users; provides an effective and comprehensive service; and ensures that services are accountable locally. To contribute to that debate we held a roundtable discussion with senior leaders from across the local government landscape including the Local Government Association, Care Quality Commission and SOLACE. The purpose of this forum was to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist to strengthen local accountability of public services, particularly in an environment where those services are delivered by many different providers.

Over the summer we will be developing our corporate strategy for the next three years and considering how we can best play our part in enhancing the local accountability of public services. We will be listening to the views of a wide range of stakeholders from across local government and social care and would be pleased to hear your comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England
Within the core cities we are the second best performing authority

Local authority report – Nottingham City Council

For the period ending – 31/03/2014

Complaints and enquires received

Local authority	Adult Cars services	Benefits and tax	Corporate and other services	Education and children's services	Environmental services & public protection and regulation	Highways and transport	Housing	Planning and development	Total
Nottingham City	11	15	13	31	11	9	18	7	115

Decisions made

	Detailed investigation carried out						
Local authority	Upheld	Not upheld	Advice given	Closed after internal enquires	Incomplete/invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Total
Nottingham City	14	30	7	29	4	40	124

Appendix 2: CIFA Nearest Neighbour Analysis

This table shows how Nottingham City Council performs within the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Model based on cultural,

Council	Complaints upheld	Complaints 2014	Complaints 2013	Population
Nottingham City	14	115	53	308,735
Salford	13	63	40	237,085
Gateshead	9	69	38	200,153
Norwich	2	49	25	134,264
Lincoln	2	15	10	94,588
Leicester City	15	118	66	331,606
Wolverhampton	5	96	52	250,970
Newcastle	3	62	36	282,442
Manchester City	16	219	79	510,772
Sheffield	16	174	79	557,382
Liverpool	21	182	90	469,690

Appendix 3: Comparison with Core Cities

This table shows how Nottingham City Council performs within the **Core Cities**, although the reporting methodology is different this year we are still the second best performing authority. Glasgow has now become one of the core cities but it isn't regulated by the LGO. Glasgow Council comes under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and they report differently so we are unable to add their statistics to this list.

Council	ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2012	Complaints Upheld	Complaints 2014	Complaints 2013
Newcastle City	282,442	3	58	36
Nottingham City	308,735	11	115	53
Manchester City	510,772	16	216	79
Sheffield City	557,382	16	166	79
Bristol City	432,451	24	150	86
Leeds City	757,655	29	218	150
Liverpool City	469,690	32	169	90
Birmingham City	108,5417	82	541	227

Appendix 4: LGO Final Decisions

The table below shows cases closed 2013 and 2014 and the final decisions from the LGO.

Department	Section	Not to investigate 2013	Not to investigate 2014	No Maladministration 2013	No maladministration 2014	Maladministration 2014	Premature 2013	Premature 2014	No jurisdiction 2013	No jurisdiction 2014
NCH		6	2	1	1		6	2	1	
Development	Planning	2	3	1	2				1	
Development	Property	1		2				1		
Development	Housing	1	1			2		1		
Resources	Council Tax	2	4	1	2		2	2	1	
Resources	Legal		1		1		1	1		
Communities	Community Protection	2	2	1	2			2	1	1
Communities	Sports Culture & Parks	1	1							1
Communities	Neighbourhood Services	1	1					1		
Children & families	School Admissions	4		1	12					
Children & families	Adult Residential Services					1	1			
Children & families	Access & Crisis Team	1								
Adults and children	Social care teams		7		7	1		5		1
Communities	Libraries				3					
Resources	HR				1					
Children & Families	Family community teams				1					
Children & families	Contract Compliance & VFM				1					