



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Standards Committee

**18 January 2022**

<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2020/21</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Finance and Governance
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Martin Bond
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Jan Bakewell Director of Legal & Governance janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Joanne Griffiths Democratic Services Manager joannegriffiths@sthelens.gov.uk 01744 673219

<b>Borough priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	X

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 To report the receipt of the Annual Review Letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

**Standards Committee is recommended to note the report.**

## 3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 To report the Annual Review letter which the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman sent to the Chief Executive on 28 July 2021 and is reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Standards Committee. Members of the Standards Committee were emailed the report for information on 2 August 2021.

## 4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) provides an Annual Review Letter to each Council to help inform elected members of their respective Council's performance in relation to complaints. A copy of the letter is attached to the report at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Annual Review Letter provides information in relation to the number of complaints received by the LGSCO in the twelve-month period ending 31 March 2021, as well as the decisions reached by the LGSCO in the same period. Members will note that in this period, four complaints were upheld, which, in comparison to 2019/20, was two less. This is based on a total of five detailed investigations for this period. 80% of complaints investigated were upheld, which compares to an average of 72% in similar authorities.
- 4.3 The Ombudsman reported that in 100% of cases they were satisfied the authority had successfully implemented their recommendations.
- 4.4 For the four upheld complaints in 2020/21, there were no trends or patterns across particular service areas to report. The four complaints related to an assisted bin collection issue, a planning consultation on the proposed expansion of a school, care received in a care home and a respite placement.

4.5 The significant challenges facing the Council in terms of budget reductions does mean that it becomes harder to continue to meet expectations and can impact on the scope for, and level of, complaints. The Council continues to treat all complaints seriously and ensures we take on board any learning points and make necessary changes to our processes where appropriate.

4.6 With regard to the number of upheld complaints. The Council's programme of transformation and performance improvement has a priority to allocate focused resource to address and support any performance issues highlighted by upheld complaints, including officer training. The Policy, Change & Reform department (reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive) includes responsibility for Policy, Performance, Business Intelligence, Communications and Reputational Management, including all complaints. This will ensure the Council reviews lessons learnt from resident concerns and complaints to inform the continuous improvement of services. The aim is to ensure timely complaints handling and learning from complaints are an integral part of the Council's culture transformation.

## **5. Community Impact Assessment**

5.1 N/A

## **6 Consideration of Alternatives**

6.1 N/A

## **7 Conclusions**

7.1 To note the Annual Review Letter.

## **8.0 Implications**

N/A

## **9. Background papers**

None

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Annual Review Letter 2020/21