

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2016**

**ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN  
1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016**

**REPORT BY SHEONA C HUNTER, HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**ABSTRACT**

This report advises members that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has presented his Annual Report for the period 2015-16 which enables Angus Council to compare itself against the sector totals for specified areas of complaints.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee reviews the statistical information provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and considers the performance of Angus Council in relation to the sector totals.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

This report supports services in the delivery of all outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2016.

**3. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN REPORT**

The annual Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Report was issued on 25 August 2016 and contained information relating to the operation of the standardised model Complaints Handling Procedure. The Report also provided statistical information in relation to the performance of each Local Authority enabling the Council to measure its performance against the sector totals of specified areas shown in the Appendix to this report. The Report also provided comparative information for year 2014-15.

In general terms the Report indicated that for year 2015-16 there was a 5% decrease in complaints and enquiries to the SPSO in connection with Local Government matters compared with 2014-15. This is a significant improvement and indicates that officers are learning from previous complaints and are improving our customer care. The issues were similar to previous years with Housing, Social Work and Planning topping the list. Although the Council aims to have no complaints, it is satisfying to note that in relation to the overall transactions carried out and in the context of reducing resources, the relatively small numbers of complaints is considered a significant improvement. It should be noted that the statistical information contained in the following tables does not necessarily match the information held by the Council as some references to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are determined without referral to the Council. This could be on the basis that the complaint is out of jurisdiction, the outcome is not achievable, it is premature, or has already been resolved.

In addition to the statistics shown in Appendix 1, the SPSO also provided details of complaints that were determined during the periods 2014-15 and 2015-16. During 2014-15 a total of 40 complaints were determined, a total of 32 complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature or outwith jurisdiction; two were not upheld, one was partially upheld and five were upheld.

During 2015-16 a total of 24 complaints were determined, 20 of these complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature, or outwith the jurisdiction of the SPSO; one was not upheld, none were partially upheld and three upheld.

**4. RISKS**

This report does not require any specific risks to be addressed.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

NOTE: The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Annual Report published on 8 October 2014 was relied on in preparing the above report.

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Table 1 – Complaints Received by Subject

Subject Group	Angus Council		Sector Totals	
	2015/2016	2014/2015	2015/2016	2014/2015
Housing	6	10	423	468
Social Work	5	10	231	253
Planning	4	5	172	217
Roads & Transport	3	2	120	119
Recreation & Leisure	2	0	32	24
Education	1	10	173	174
Finance	0	0	179	174
Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	2	126	148
Legal & Admin	0	1	61	76
Building Control	0	0	54	61
Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants	0	1	31	14
Land & Property	0	2	20	29
Other	0	1	17	21
Economic Development	0	0	11	8
Personnel	0	1	9	10
Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants	0	0	9	12
National Park Authorities	0	0	6	4
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	6	6
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	5	4
Consumer Protection	0	0	4	8
Subject Unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	33	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>1880</b>

The number of Angus Council complaints as a percentage of the Sector totals were 2.1% in 2014-15 and 1.2% in 2015-16. For context the population of Angus is 2.2% of the Scottish total.

