

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2015

**ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN
1 APRIL 2014 TO 30 MARCH 2015**

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 2014-15 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 7 October 2015 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 2013-14 which was the first year of implementation of the new Complaints Procedure.

In general terms the Report indicates that for year 2014-15 there was a 10% rise in complaints in connection with Local Government matters compared with 2013-14. The issues were similar to previous years with Housing, Social Work, Education and Planning topping the list. 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 2013-14 and 2014-15. During 2013-15 a total of 25 complaints were determined, a total of 22 complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature or outwith jurisdiction; two were not upheld and one was resolved.

During 2014-15 a total of 40 complaints were determined, 32 of these complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature, or outwith the jurisdiction of the SPSO; two were not upheld, one partially upheld and five 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	
	2014/2015	2013/2014	2014/2015	2013/2014
Housing	10	9	468	446
Social Work	10	7	253	229
Education	5	1	174	171
Planning	4	6	217	223
Environmental Health & Cleansing	2	0	148	98
Roads & Transport	2	1	119	119
Land & Property	2	0	29	28
Legal & Admin	1	1	76	75
Other	1	0	21	9
Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants	1	1	14	10
Personnel	1	0	10	7
Finance	0	0	174	173
Building Control	0	1	61	62
Recreation & Leisure	0	2	24	30
Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants	0	0	12	6
Consumer Protection	0	0	8	8
Economic Development	0	0	8	3
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	6	10
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	4	3
National Park Authorities	0	0	3	2
Subject Unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	51	38
Total	39	29	1880	1750

The number of Angus Council complaints as a percentage of the Sector totals were 1.7% in 2013-14 and 2.1% in 2014-15. For context the population of Angus is 2.2% of the Scottish total.