

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 25 NOVEMBER 2014

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

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 2013/2014 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 8 October 2014 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 2012/2013 which was the first year of implementation of the new Complaints Procedure.

In general terms the Report indicates that for year 2013/2014 there was a 16% rise in complaints in connection with Local Government matters compared with 2012/2013. The issues were similar to previous years with Housing, Social Work 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 2012-13 and 2013-14. A total of 21 complaints were determined during 2012-13, a total of 17 complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature or outwith jurisdiction; two were not upheld; one has had no decision reached; and one was partially upheld.

During 2013-14 a total of 25 complaints were determined, 23 of these complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature, or outwith the jurisdiction of the SPSO and two complaints were not upheld. Of the total cases determined by the SPSO during the years 2012-13 and 2013-14 only one case was partly 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.

REPORT AUTHOR: Sheona C Hunter, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

EMAIL DETAILS: LEGDEM@angus.gov.uk

Table 1 – Complaints Received by Subject

Subject Group	Angus Council		Sector Totals	
	2013/2014	2012/2013	2013/2014	2012/2013
Housing	9	5	446	361
Social Work	7	4	229	183
Planning	6	6	223	197
Recreation & Leisure	2	0	30	20
Education	1	0	171	76
Roads & Transport	1	0	119	73
Building Control	1	0	62	26
Legal & Admin	1	0	75	48
Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants	1	0	10	0
Finance	0	0	173	85
Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	2	98	60
Land & Property	0	1	28	28
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	10	6
Other	0	0	9	10
Consumer Protection	0	1	8	9
Personnel	0	0	7	7
Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants	0	0	6	0
Economic Development	0	0	3	1
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	3	2
National Park Authorities	0	0	2	0
Subject Unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	0	4	38	313
Total	29	23	1750	1505

The number of Angus Council complaints as a percentage of the Sector totals were 1.5% in 2012/13 and 1.7% in 2013/14. For context the population of Angus is 2.2% of the Scottish total.