

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 21 NOVEMBER 2017

**ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN
1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 MARCH 2017**

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 2016-17 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, the Single Outcome Agreement and the Corporate Plan.

3. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN REPORT

The annual Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Report was issued on 4 October 2017 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 2015-16.

In general terms the Report indicated that for year 2016-17 there was no change in the amount of complaints and enquiries to the SPSO in connection with Local Government matters compared with 2015-16. The Sector received a total of 1528 complaints of which the Council's complaints were 21 which equates to 1.4%. The issues have changed from previous years with Social Work and Planning topping the list and Housing previously ranking from first to fifth this year. 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 2015-16 and 2016-17. During 2015-16 a total of 24 complaints were determined, a total of 20 complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature or outwith jurisdiction; one was not upheld and three were upheld.

During 2016-17 a total of 22 complaints were determined, 21 of these complaints were found to be either improperly made, premature, or outwith the jurisdiction of the SPSO and one was partially 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 6 October 2017 was relied on in preparing the above report.

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Table 1 – Complaints Received by Subject

Subject Group	Angus Council		Sector Totals	
	2016/2017	2015/2016	2016/2017	2015/2016
Social Work	9	5	219	231
Planning	4	4	160	172
Education	2	1	144	173
Finance	2	0	120	179
Housing	1	6	388	423
Roads & Transport	1	3	112	120
Consumer Protection	1	0	4	4
Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	0	124	126
Legal & Admin	0	0	73	61
Building Control	0	0	34	54
Recreation & Learning	0	2	29	32
Land & Property	0	0	19	20
Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants	0	0	14	31
Other	0	0	8	17
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	7	6
National Park Authorities	0	0	6	6
Economic Development	0	0	5	11
Personnel	0	0	5	9
Welfare Funds – Crisis Grants	0	0	5	9
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	4	5
Subject Unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	1	0	48	33
Total	21	21	1528	1722

The number of Angus Council complaints as a percentage of the Sector totals were 1.2% in 2015-16 and 1.4% in 2016-17.