

## **Standards Committee**

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

### **Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2007/08**

#### **Summary**

1. This report draws Members' attention to the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the year 2007/08, which was received by the Chief Executive in June 2008.

#### **Background**

2. The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) considers complaints about the administrative actions of councils and some other authorities. The Annual Letter, a copy of which is attached as Annex A to this report, provides a summary of the complaints received about the City of York Council during the year ending 31 March 2008. It includes comments on the Council's performance and complaints handling arrangements, with the aim of assisting with service improvements.
3. The Annual Letter records that the LGO received a total of 39 complaints against the City of York Council during 2007/08. This was 28 fewer than last year and 33 fewer than the year before that, representing a downward trend for which the LGO commends the Council. The LGO further comments that the Council *'has a robust complaints handling procedure which is easily accessible to residents in the Council's area'*.

#### **Consultation**

10. The Annual Audit Letter will also be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.

#### **Options**

11. This report is for the information of the Committee. Consequently, there are no options for Members to consider.

## **Analysis**

12. The report is for information, to keep the Standards Committee advised of the situation with regard to complaints against the Council and to assist it in fulfilling its Constitutional role *'to promote and maintain high standards of conduct in the transaction of all Council and Local Council business'*. Members may wish to comment on the LGO's favourable conclusions regarding the Council's complaints procedures, as expressed in the Annual Letter.

## **Corporate Priorities**

13. Taking note of the LGO's Annual Letter will contribute to the Council's overall Corporate Strategy by supporting the Council's aim to deliver the best quality services it can afford and encourage improvement in everything it does.

## **Implications**

14. There are no specific legal, financial, HR, equalities, crime and disorder, IT, or property implications arising out of this report.

## **Risk Management**

15. There is a risk to the standing and reputation of the Council if it does not ensure high standards of conduct within the organisation.

## **Recommendations**

16. The Standards Committee are recommended to note the contents of the Annual Audit Letter for 2007/08.

Reason: In the interests of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in the transaction of all Council business.

## Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 8/7/08

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** List information for all

None

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

City of York Council's Constitution (*available on the Council's website at <http://www.york.gov.uk/council/constitution/>*)

**Annexes**

Annex A – The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for City of York Council, for the year ended 31 March 2008