



**North East
Derbyshire**
District Council

Contact: Thomas Scott - Governance and
Scrutiny Officer
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Date: Monday, 1 September 2025

To: **Members of the Services Scrutiny Committee**

Please attend a meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday, 9 September 2025, at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber at the District Council Offices, 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth, Chesterfield, S42 6NG.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Skeneberg".

Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Any substitutions must be notified to the [Governance Manager](#) in advance by midday the working day before the meeting.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

4 Overview of Council's Complaints Procedure (Pages 3 - 7)

To receive an overview of the Council's complaints procedure and reporting system.

Rachael Pope, Customer Services Manager

Access for All statement

You can request this document or information in another format such as **large print** or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone** -01246 231111
- **Email** - connectne@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk
- **Text** - 07800 00 24 25
- **BSL Video Call** – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call North East Derbyshire District Council with [Sign Solutions](#) or call into the offices at Wingerworth.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) via textphone or app on 0800 500 888 a free phone service
- **Visiting** our offices at 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth, S42 6NG

North East Derbyshire District Council

Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date 09th September 2025

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter

Report of the Assistant Director of Communities

This report is public

Report By: Lee Pepper

Contact Officer: Rachael Pope

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

To review the Annual Review letter of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) **Appendix 1** attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Scrutiny Committee acknowledge the report and findings of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder –
Cllr Birkin – Cabinet Member for Customer Services

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes ☐ No ☐

The Council is at risk of reputational damage by recommendations or decisions by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well.

In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

In the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental information request, the Information Commissioner's office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

The policy allows compliance with the Local Government Act 1974 and guidance set out by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. It is also in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: NEDDC: Revenue - £125,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £310,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	None
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) details:	
Stage 1 screening undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">Completed EIA stage 1 to be appended if not required to do a stage 2	N/A.
Stage 2 full assessment undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">Completed EIA stage 2 needs to be appended to the report	N/A
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> SMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details:

Links to Council Plan priorities, including Climate Change, Economic and Health implications.

Continually improve Council services to deliver excellence and value for money – Good Governance.

REPORT DETAILS

1 Background

1.1 The Council received its Annual Review letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman on the 21st May 2025. It contains information on how many complaints and enquiries had been referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and how many complaints were upheld or referred back for local resolution.

1.2 There were 9 complaints and enquiries received in total by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

To provide context the Council received 227 complaints in total during the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 this consists of 197 Formal complaints and 30 Internal Reviews.

Ref	Authority	Category	Decided	Decision
24003706	NEDDC	Planning & Development	19/07/2024	Closed after initial enquiries
24005334	NEDDC	Corporate & Other Services	14/08/2024	Closed after initial enquiries
24008715	NEDDC	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	16/10/2024	Closed after initial enquiries
24009825	NEDDC	Planning & Development	14/11/2024	Closed after initial enquiries
24012825	NEDDC	Planning & Development	22/10/2024	Referred back for local resolution
24013919	NEDDC	Housing	14/11/2024	Advice given
24020434	NEDDC	Corporate & Other Services	03/03/2025	Referred back for local resolution
24019909	NEDDC	Planning & Development	08/04/2025	Not investigating
24012009	NEDDC	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	ongoing	ongoing

1.3 From the 9 complaints and enquiries received by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

- 4 Complaints were closed after initial enquiries
- 2 Complaints were referred back for local resolution
- 1 Complaint advice given
- 1 Complaint not investigating
- 1 Complaint ongoing

- 1.4 This year's performance compares favourably compared to previous years where complaints and enquiries were referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman as; 3 – complaints were upheld, 3 – complaints were referred back for local resolution, 1 – complaint was not upheld and 7 – complaints were closed after initial resolution.
- 1.5 This year's data will be uploaded to the LG&SCO website where all Councils performance can be seen on: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance>

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Ensuring we have a customer friendly and robust Compliments, Comments and Complaints process which aims to resolve matters prior to referral to the Ombudsman is the key priority. To continually improve this, we:

Deliver face to face training to individual departments when requested. This provides a consistent approach in the way that all officers effectively deal with all Compliments, Comments and Complaints.

Ensure all officers dealing with complaints complete quality assurance documentation confirming they have put suitable monitoring arrangements in place as part of our learning from complaints process.

Arrange for officers that deal with all stages of the complaints process to attend training delivered by the LG&SCO. It is recommended that officers attend training bi-annually. The last training session took place on the 16th January 2025 which was well attended by staff.

A review of the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure takes place every three years the next review is during this financial year financial 2025 / 2026.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
Appendix A	Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet, you must provide copies of the background papers)	

21 May 2025

By email

Mr Hickin
Managing Director
North East Derbyshire District Council

Dear Mr Hickin

Annual Review letter 2024-25

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England