

North East Derbyshire District Council

Standards Committee

2 July 2025

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW
LETTER**

Report of the Assistant Director of Communities

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Lee Pepper, Assistant Director of Communities

Contact Officer: Rachael Pope, Customer Service Manager

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

Approved by the Portfolio Holder for Council
Services – Cllr J Birkin

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)	