

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th September 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints - The Local Authority Report for Stockton 2014/15

2. Record of the Decision

The report provides Cabinet with details of the Ombudsman's annual review letter for the Council for 2014/15.

The Ombudsman had published the annual summary of statistics on the complaints received about the Council for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Copies of the review letter and statistics tables were attached to the report.

Also attached to the report, as a comparison, was a copy of the 2013/14 Ombudsman's annual report for the Council.

When comparing the two statistics tables, it could be seen that:-

- Complaints/enquiries received in 2014/15 increased by 25%
- Complaints/enquiries about adult care services increased three fold.
- Complaints/enquiries about education/childrens services doubled.
- Complaints/enquiries about benefits and tax halved; and
- Complaints/enquiries about planning and development reduced by two thirds.

The significant increase in Ombudsman complaints / enquiries for Stockton in the last two years were reflected nationally and the Ombudsman had highlighted how Council complaints systems were coming under increasing pressure, with more complaints and more complaints that were complex and time consuming, at a time when the resources available to manage them were reducing.

As regards the 47 decisions made by the Ombudsman in relation to Stockton's complaints in 2014/15, four were upheld. However, the Ombudsman was satisfied in each case by the Council's response to the

complaints and no formal reports were issued during the year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure Members are aware of the position regarding complaints to the Ombudsman about the Council.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

18th September 2015

Proper Officer
14 September 2015