

**ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT REVIEW LETTER 2021
(LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN)**

The Council receives an annual summary from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). This covers how Rushmoor Borough Council has responded to a complaints recorded with the Ombudsman following an original investigation that will have been conducted under the Council's own Complaint's Policy. This year's review period covered 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. It is worth noting that, from April 2020 to late June 2020, the Ombudsman took the unprecedented decision to stop taking on new casework, temporarily, to allow authorities to concentrate efforts on frontline services during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The LGSCO feels that maintaining good public administration is more important than ever during this time. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the performance and helps plan for our future. The information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

The LGSCO is finding that, due to considerable and prolonged budget and demand pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has amplified problems and issues. They are finding with much greater frequency, poor local complaint handling practices when investigating substantive service issues.

1. Purpose:

To update the Committee on the positive response and outcome of the review letter (attached).

2. Findings:

The LGSCO carried out no detailed investigations during this period, matching the Council's record during the previous year. Therefore, there are no further recommendations for service improvement.

3. Conclusion:

It is recommended the Committee note the position and that the Council carry on managing any complaints through the current complaints policy and ensure that the Council continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of its policy and responses. This report provides the Council with the evidence that Council is responding well to complaints and is in effect a "clean bill of health" from a credible third party.

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