

25TH NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT NO. CE0119

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS REPORT

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The purpose of this report is to update the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee on the annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The report shows that Rushmoor Borough Council had 0% complaints upheld by the LGO during the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This compares to an average of 43% in similar authorities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The local government ombudsman (LGO) report is received annually. This report supplies local authorities with information on the number of complaints that have escalated to them, after the complaint has gone through an authority's complaints process. The LGO will investigate individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. They will review the action and decision of the local authority to ascertain if the correct decision was made or reasonable measures to mitigate future issues were taken.

2. REPORT DETAILS

The LGO report states that Rushmoor Borough Council had **0%** of complaints upheld during the reporting period of 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This compares to an average of **43%** in similar authorities.

This statistic shows Rushmoor's commitment to the investigation and resolution of complaints and our ongoing commitment to customer excellence.

The LGO received 9 complaints for investigation from our customer base: 4 were closed after the initial investigation and 4 were referred back to us for resolution; and 1 was not upheld.

18000309	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	10 Apr 2018	Premature Decision - advice given	Referred back for local resolution	Null
18003365	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	06 Jul 2018	Not warranted by alleged injustice	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
18003440	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	09 Jul 2018	Not warranted by alleged injustice	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
18003481	Rushmoor Borough Council	Housing	09 Jul 2018	Premature Decision - referred to BinJ	Referred back for local resolution	Null
18002526	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	13 Jul 2018	Not warranted by alleged mal/service failure	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
18003930	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	23 Jul 2018	Premature Decision - referred to BinJ	Referred back for local resolution	Null
18006251	Rushmoor Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	23 Jul 2018	Premature Decision - advice given	Referred back for local resolution	Null
18012285	Rushmoor Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07 Jan 2019	Other Agency better placed	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
18004393	Rushmoor Borough Council	Planning & Development	07 Mar 2019	no mal	Not Upheld	Null

Following on from the LGO report we examined some of the surrounding local authorities to benchmark the area. Below is a sample:

- Hart, **50%** of complaints investigated were upheld
- Basingstoke and Dean, **100%** of complaints investigated were upheld
- Reading, **56%** of complaints investigated were upheld
- Woking, **20%** of complaints investigated were upheld
- Surrey Heath BC, **20%** of complaints investigated were upheld.

3. COMPLAINT SERVICE

The Rushmoor BC's complaints service received 330 contacts in the same reporting period; 68 were identified as complaints for resolution. Rushmoor BC does not currently record "grumbles" in the same way as complaints but does examine the high-level data for analysis.

The Customer Experience portfolio has now become established in Rushmoor and, as such, the complaints function has moved into that area and is managed by the Customer Service Manager.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the excellent report from the LGO, we will look to continue to develop our good working practices and further increase the knowledge of our customers' complaints and grumbles.

In the future, we will look to move the complaint recording and processing into the customer relationship manager (CRM) to better collate data, attach complaints to customer files and record "grumbles" for better decisions on service delivery.

Colin Eckworth
Head of Customer Experience