

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 12 JULY, 2007

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION: 9 AUGUST, 2007

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER (CABINET)

(Author: Susan Allen – Standards Officer)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER

Summary: To note the Local Government Ombudsman's comments on his dealings with the Council as set out in his annual letter and to identify any issues for inclusion in a response.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The annual letter for 2006/07 is attached. It sets out the general views on the way in which the Council treats complaints and makes specific points on the way in which certain cases, or categories of complaints, are dealt with.

2. KEY DECISION

- 2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priorities:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
- A prosperous place to live and work

4. ANNUAL LETTER

- 4.1 The following are aspects of the annual letter.

- 4.1.1 The Ombudsman received 26 complaints from the district's residents last year.

- 4.1.2 Eighteen complaints about planning matters were received. The remaining complaints were spread across most subject areas.

- 4.1.3 The Ombudsman made decisions on 29 complaints concerning the Council last year. There was one finding of maladministration causing loss of amenity. One was outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, 7 were premature, 1 was settled locally and 19 were not pursued because of no evidence of maladministration was seen or because it was decided for other reasons not to pursue them.

- 4.1.4 The response was 20.4 days, and the Council are in the top 48% of authorities in terms of response times.

5. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 5.1 The Committee is asked:

- a. to note the report;
- b. for any observations to be made to the Ombudsman.

Appendices: Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman for year ended 31st March, 2007 and statistical data.