

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

23 October 2025

Annual Statistics from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jane Spilsbury - Portfolio Holder for Performance, Engagement and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author Nicola Cummings	Job Title: Principal Solicitor Contact email: Nicola.cummings@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881613
Wards affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	n/a
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Sustainability
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	n/a
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee RESOLVE that, subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of the annual summary of complaint statistics issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ("LGSCO") for the period ending 31st March 2025.

2.2 The usual way this information is delivered to Councils is in an annual letter issued by the LGSCO in September each year. However, this year the LGSCO has decided to change the system. Instead of issuing an annual review letter in September setting out the statistics, a two stage approach will now be used:-

- (i) In May each year the LGSCO will finalise the annual statistics for the year ended 31st March and will forward this information to Councils and publish it on the LGSCO

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

23 October 2025

website. This will apply to all Councils in England and Wales.

- (ii) In July each year certain Councils (but not all) will receive an annual letter. The LGSCO has stated that “this will apply where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation’s complaint handling”.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Officers can confirm that Redditch Borough Council (RBC) did not receive an annual letter as outlined in paragraph 2.2 (ii). Accordingly, this report sets out for Members a breakdown of the annual statistics and Members are referred to the following Appendices:-

- Appendix 1 – Annual letter dated 21st May 2025
- Appendix 2 – Annual Statistics

- 3.2 For the period ending on 31 March 2025, the statistics for RBC as collated and published by the LGSCO were recorded as follows:-

Number of Complaints Received – 14

Housing	13
Other	1

Number of Complaints Decided - 14

Housing	13
Other	1

- 3.3 Of these 14 decided cases, there was only one case where the LGSCO upheld the complaint and found the Council to be at fault. This was in the category of housing and related to a decision made under the housing allocations policy. Specifically, new evidence came to light in a complex housing case which led to a previous decision to award the status of homelessness to the complainant being overturned. Whilst the investigation did not criticise the decision making, the Council was found to be at fault for not having offered the complainant the right to appeal when the original homelessness decision was reversed. The remedy was for the Council to offer the complainant the option to appeal.

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

23 October 2025

3.4 The outcome of this complaint was recorded as “Upheld – fault and injury”. As set out above, the remedy was to provide the option of an appeal and there was no separate requirement for the payment of any compensation.

3.5 In relation to the other 13 complaints the recorded outcomes were as follows:-

Outcome	Number	Explanation
Closed after initial inquiries	2	Complaint assessed but LGSCO decided not to investigate it.
Advice given	7	Early advice given by LGSCO or customer directed to appropriate service.
Referred back for local resolution	3	Premature complaint; referred back to Council for resolution.
Incomplete/ Invalid	1	Insufficient information to proceed.

3.6 Guidance issued by the LGSCO provides that where findings of maladministration/fault with regard to routine mistakes and service failures occur and the authority has agreed to remedy the complaints by implementing the recommendations made following the investigation, the duty to report to members is satisfactorily discharged if the Monitoring Officer makes a periodic report to members summarising the findings on upheld complaints over a specific period. In a small authority this may be adequately addressed through an annual report.

3.7 Only where an investigation has wider implications for council policy or exposes a more significant finding of maladministration, perhaps because of the scale of fault or injustice, or the number of people affected, the LGSCO would expect the Monitoring Officer to consider whether the implications of that investigation should be individually reported to members.

3.8 Other relevant factors which impact on the levels of complaints are provision of a high standard of customer service and good complaint handling. Members will be aware that an updated complaint handling system was introduced in September 2024. The LGSCO guidance on complaint handling was taken into consideration by officers when the new system was designed.

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

23 October 2025

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Local Government Ombudsman powers are contained in the Local Government Act 1974 as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.2 The main activity of the LGSCO is the investigation of complaints, which are limited to complaints from members of the public.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 Not applicable.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 An Effective and Sustainable Council.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 Not applicable.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 In terms of customer implications, providing good customer service is of significant importance to the Council and the statistics in the review will assist officers in the monitoring of complaint handling and resolution.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are those linked to poor standards of complaint handling. The effects of not handling complaints efficiently can include poor customer service, increased customer dissatisfaction, increased numbers of complaints and damage to the Council's reputation.

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

23 October 2025

- 7.2 These risks are being managed through the Council's Customer services strategy which aims to promote good customer service throughout the Council and includes a defined procedure for responding to complaints before they reach the stage of being referred to the Ombudsman.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Annual Letter dated 21st May 2025

Appendix 2 - Annual summary of complaint statistics 2024 to 2025

Link to view annual statistics on the LGSCO website:

[Redditch Borough Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Jane Spilsbury	10/10/2025
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton – Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	10/10/2025
Financial Services	Deb Goodall - Assistant Director - Finance and Customer Services	09/10/2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor	06/10/2025
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	n/a	