

Audit Committee

29th September 2025

PRESENT:-

Councillors K Neal (Chair), M Collinson, Henry, Herrera-Richmond, McCobb (Deputy Chair), Wood and D Thompson.

IN ATTENDANCE:-

D. Bell (Director of Finance and Transformation and Section 151 Officer), (T. Parker (Assistant Director of Finance), M. Armstrong (Head of Accountancy), M. Garlick (Customer Feedback Team Leader), M. Outterside (Mazars), J. Gooding (South West Audit Partnership) and P. Todd (Scrutiny Officer).

APOLOGIES:-

None

Minute No.	Description/Decision	Action By/Deadline
PROCEDURAL ITEMS		
12.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No declarations of interest were received in respect of the items that follow below.	
13.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2025 Agreed – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 th March 2025 be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair.	
NON-EXEMPT ITEMS		
14.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN AND HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE – ANNUAL REPORT The Director of Legal Services and Partnerships submitted a report that detailed the Council's Annual Review Letter 2024-25 about complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service for the year ending 31 March 2025 and the actions the Council had taken to resolve them. The report also provided the annual	

report on the Council's complaint performance in respect of its role as a landlord.

The Committee were informed that the LGSCO had given a positive annual review of Hull City Council, with a low number of investigations and upheld complaints. The number of complaints that had been received by the Council had increased, which suggested the Council's response to complaints was robust and effective and handling them.

A discussion took place on patterns in cases being referred to the Ombudsman. The officer advising the Committee that there had been an increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), which reflected the national picture. The current legislation caused problems for both families and authorities alike, of which the Ombudsman had also recognised and written to the Government.

Members questioned if there had been a particular service area or type of case that should be looked at in further detail. The officer advised that regular reports were made to Corporate Strategy Team (CST) to look at the finer details of complaints. The system allowed for categorisation and subcategories to allow officers to identify the main areas of concern and fed back to the relevant service areas. In general, it was highlighted that most complaints arose about not delivering a service as expected or delivering the service outside the expected time scale.

A further discussion took place around complaints made to Kingstown Works Limited (KWL). The Committee were informed that a new process has been put in place to allow KWL to record directly into the Council's system to streamline the process. Members suggested further investigation into the working practices of KWL, communication concerns with residents and complaints received on services provided.

The Committee were advised that all lessons learned from complaints were captured and tracked by the Customer Feedback Team Leader. Service areas were required to provide suitable proof that the necessary arrangements had been

	<p>put in place to give assurance to the Customer Feedback Team Leader before being sent to the Ombudsman. All broader learning points, that could be applied Council wide, were presented to CST and via a network which had representatives from all service areas, to disseminate to all areas required.</p> <p>The Committee were disappointed that there were not similar opportunities for engagement with the Housing Ombudsman Service as those provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The arrangements with the LGSCO appeared to present far better opportunities for engagement and learning. The HOS appeared to provide limited options to engage with them. The Committee also noted that the annual report from the HOS was not written in a user-friendly way and the layout left confusion for the reader as it did not follow a common-sense approach.</p> <p>Agreed –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the Committee note the contents of this report and the degree of assurance this provides in relation to the Council's governance arrangements; b. that the Committee continues to receive an annual report to inform its role in considering the Council's Annual Governance Statement and maintaining appropriate oversight with regard to the potential receipt of any public reports from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and c. that the Committee continues to receive an annual report to comply with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code. d. that the Committee invites Communities Overview and Scrutiny Commission to investigate the working practices of KWL, communication concerns with residents and complaints received on services provided, and, e. that the concerns contained within the minute be brought to the attention of the Housing Ombudsman Service for their consideration. 	<p>a-c. Director of Legal Services and Partnerships</p> <p>d. Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>e. Customer Feedback Team Leader</p>
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