

WIRRAL COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 27 JANUARY 2009 REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

COMPLAINTS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN –CURRENT PERFORMANCE

1. Executive Summary

As part of the Action Plan agreed by this committee to address performance in relation to Ombudsman's Complaints this committee receives a quarterly report on response times. This reports sets out the current performance.

2. Current Performance

- 2.1 For the quarter 01/09/08 – 31/12/08 the Council received 8 complaints. The average time it took to respond to the Ombudsman was 41 days (against a target of 28 days). This is a disappointing lapse in the previously significantly improved response times.
- 2.2 This is attributable mainly to 2 cases where there was a significant delay in the response. In one case (68 days) the Ombudsman contacted the client department directly. This meant that the case was not picked up by the monitoring process put in place by my department until the deadline for responding had already been passed. This issue has been raised at the Departmental Co-ordinators' Group. The other case (71 days) appears to have been caused by an error.
- 2.3 Whilst this performance is disappointing it is anticipated that the strong performance over the first half of the year and an improved performance in the final quarter will enable the overall target to be met. All staff involved will be reminded of the need to ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly and prioritised. This report will also be taken to Chief Officers Management Team.
- 2.4 I previously reported that the Finance Department will be taking over the co-ordination of Ombudsman's complaints. This will now be done with effect from 1 April 2009. Officers are in discussions to secure a seamless transition.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

4. Local Member Support

There are no implications for individual wards arising directly from this report.

5. Equal Opportunity Implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

6. Human Right Implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

7. **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

8. **Community Safety Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

9. **Planning Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

10. **Background Papers**

There are no background papers

11. **Recommendations**

- (1) That the notes the content of this report.
- (2) That the Committee receives further reports on progress and performance.

BILL NORMAN

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

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