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REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

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TO  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
ON  
7 NOVEMBER 2019

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TITLE: Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) – Annual Review Letter 2019

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Standards Committee note the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's (LG&SCO) Annual Review Letter for Salford City Council and recognise that the Council takes very seriously its obligations in responding to complaints about services and in learning from the LG&SCO's findings.

That the Standards Committee note and approve the progress in process improvement for dealing with LG&SCO cases by the Council and its partners.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to present the LG&SCO's Annual Review Letter 2019 containing the summary of statistics on complaints and enquiries made to the LG&SCO about Salford City Council for the year ending 31 March 2019.

The report also highlights progress made in respect of the process for dealing with complaints.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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KEY DECISION: NO

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## DETAILS:

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) investigates complaints from members of the public alleging they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration and/or service failure of local authorities, police and crime bodies, school admission appeal panels and a range of other bodies which provide local services. It also investigates complaints from people who allege they have suffered injustice as a result of action by adult social care providers.
- 1.2 The LG&SCO aims to resolve cases informally where it can and determine the reasonableness of decisions of bodies being complained about. Its recommendations aim to provide redress in cases of service failure.
- 1.3 The Annual Review Letter 2019, attached as Appendix A, summarises the complaints and enquiries received by the LG&SCO about Salford City Council. Appendix B summarises the findings of the LG&SCO following any investigations or informal resolutions. Members will see that, out of a total of 84 complaints received, 12 were subject to detailed investigations, following which seven were upheld. Appendix C provides a brief summary of those seven complaints, the findings of the investigations and subsequent actions agreed or taken by the Council.
- 1.4 The Annual Review Letter makes it clear that the volume of complaints does not necessarily reflect local performance.
- 1.5 the Council became concerned that there was an apparent increase in complaints and that the Council's processes and those of its partners needed to be aligned.
- 1.6 The Council noted that the increase in partnership working necessitated the introduction of processes designed to ensure a consistent response to Complaints handling. The Council has identified a Squad with is close to finalising work on a more structured complaints handling process. This will ensure a more citizen focused service which meets all of the council's statutory responsibilities.
- 1.7 The Monitoring Officer was asked to undertake a review and the first part of that is due to complete at the end of October 2019. There will then be a further consultation period and the new system is hoped to be introduced before the end of the financial year. The Complaints Squad has made a number of recommendations and meetings are now taking place to see how best these can be implemented.

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## KEY COUNCIL POLICIES:

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

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ASSESSMENT OF RISK:

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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: Failure by the Council to comply with complaints procedures presents a risk of both reputational damage and financial loss if the Council is found to be at fault. City Solicitor

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

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PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

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HR IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

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OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED:

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WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: ALL