

COUNCIL – 12 JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

Report by the Monitoring Officer

Introduction

1. The Local Government Ombudsman has issued a public report in response to an investigation into complaints against Oxfordshire County Council's Safeguarding Adults Team and Huntercombe Hall Care Home. The complaint relates to events that took place in 2014. The Ombudsman's report is Annex 1 to this report.
2. The Ombudsman concluded that there is a public interest in how the complaint and the care of the complainant's wife were mismanaged and how further residents may have been at risk.
3. Under the Local Government Act 1974, Council must consider the report of the Ombudsman and confirm to her the steps the Council has taken, or is taking, to comply with the recommendations of the Ombudsman.
4. The Director of Adult Social Services has issued a briefing for councillors to set out the actions that the Council has taken and which comply with the recommendations of the Ombudsman. The Council is asked to consider the Ombudsman's recommendations and the actions taken by the Council.

Action needed

5. The Director's briefing at Annex 1 sets out the actions already taken by the Council in response to the Ombudsman's recommendations insofar as the complaint related to the County Council (it largely related to a private care home).
6. Given that the complaint relates back to 2014, the Director of Adult Social Services actions, already taken, were noted with satisfaction by the Ombudsman in her report. In the news release issued by her, the Ombudsman said: "I welcome the significant steps Oxfordshire council has already taken to improve its policies, procedures and staff training in this area and am pleased it has agreed to my further recommendations."
7. Council needs to note the Ombudsman's recommendations and approve the actions set out by the Director.

Legal and financial implications

8. The public report has been issued by the Local Government Ombudsman under the Local Government Act 1974 as the complaint raised issues that the Ombudsman felt should be more widely known. The Ombudsman recommended the payment to the complainant of £750 for the injustice and distress caused, which the Council will pay. Notwithstanding that the actions outlined by the Director have already been taken, and noted by the Ombudsman, Council is required to endorse the sufficiency of these and to convey this to the Ombudsman (by 21 September).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) consider the Ombudsman's recommendations set out in Annex 1 to the report;**
- (b) approve the actions set out in the report of the Director of Adult Social Services at Annex 2; and**
- (c) ask the Monitoring Officer & Chief Legal Officer to write to the Ombudsman accordingly.**

NICK GRAHAM
Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer

Background papers: Nil

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