

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Audit and Standards Committee

**Date:** 7 December 2020

**Title:** Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Complaints Monitoring

**Report of:** Mark Adams, Customer Services Manager

**Purpose of Report:** To receive an update on the number of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints received since the last report in June 2020.

**Officer**

**Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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1. Details of the complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) are reported to the Committee as and when they are determined throughout the year. I previously reported that the LGSCO suspended all complaint casework from the 26 March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic which resulted in only a limited number of complaints being reported in June 2020.

### Complaint Casework

2. The LGSCO resumed their complaint casework on 29 June 2020 to which details of the cases determined since the Committee's last meeting are shown below:

REFERENCE	DETAILS OF THE ALLEGATION	OUTCOME
19 008 478	The complainant alleges the Council failed to take action to protect them and others from noisy refrigeration equipment which affected their amenity.	Complaint not upheld – investigation found no fault in the way the Council made its decision.
19 018 835	The complainant alleges they have been over charged council tax for the last two years.	The Ombudsman will not investigate this complaint due to it being made late and it was deemed reasonable for the complainant to use the appeal rights available.
20 000 626	The complainant alleges the Council has failed to take enforcement action against an unauthorised development.	Complaint not investigated by the Ombudsman as they are unlikely to find fault in the Council's actions.
20 000 740	The complainant alleges poor quality of workmanship to the roof of their beach hut.	Complaint not investigated by the Ombudsman as it would be reasonable to take the matter to court.

REFERENCE	DETAILS OF THE ALLEGATION	OUTCOME
20 002 704	The complainant states the Council wrongly published his personal information on the planning section of its website.	The Ombudsman will not investigate this complaint about an alleged breach of personal data. This is because the Information Commissioner's Office is the appropriate body to consider concerns raised.

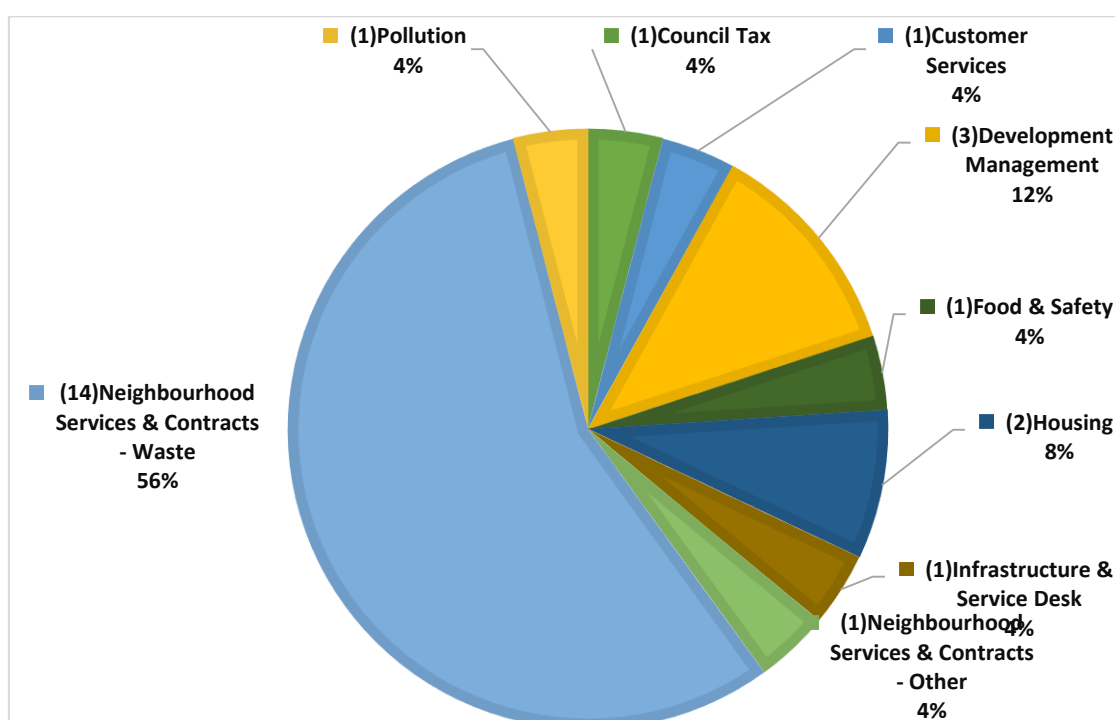
3. A total of five complaints were made to the LGSCO covering the period 28 May 2020 to 13 November 2020 of which:

- One not upheld (Council found not at fault).
- Four cannot be investigated.

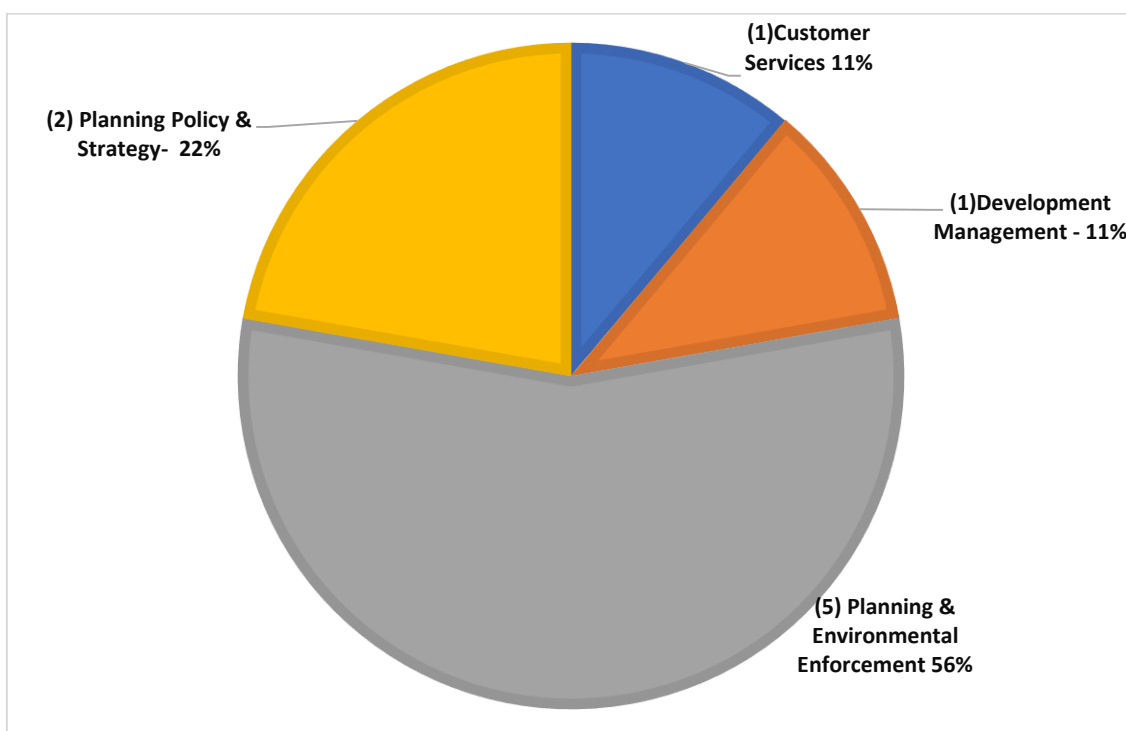
4. Members previously requested more information on complaints that Rother District Council (RDC) handle in addition to the LGSCO complaints. RDC received 157 complaints from 28 May 2020 to 13 November 2020 of which:

- 111 of these were treated as non-complaints (69 department service requests, 20 were East Sussex County Council issues and 22 were regarding non-RDC matters mainly relating to housing associations, Police, Southern Water etc.).
- 22 complaints were resolved at initial stage (non-formal complaint resolution).
- Three complaints were stage 1 complaints (responded to formally in writing by department manager).
- Nine complaints were stage 2 complaints (responded to formally by Head of Service).
- 12 are still currently under investigation.

5. The pie chart below shows the percentage of complaints by area for the initial stage and stage 1 complaints:



6. Stage 2 complaints percentage by area are shown in the pie chart below:



7. RDC extended the time taken to respond to complaints from 20 working days to 40 working days and put priority on complaints where there was risk to public health and safety. The average complaint response time is currently 23.19 working days.

8. The LGSCO are currently behind in their casework and it is expected that we will receive further decisions over the coming months. These will be reported in June 2021.

### Conclusion

9. The Committee is asked to note the report.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	None.
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.