

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Ombudsman considers complaints of maladministration and service failure against public bodies and allegations against members of local authorities that they have broken the Code of Conduct. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has published his annual report for 2013/2014 and this can be found on the following link: https://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/~media/Files/AnnualReports_en/PSOW%20Annual%20Report%202013-14%20Final%20for%20laying%20and%20website%20English.ashx

The report does contain some lessons and pointers for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

They are the need to uphold the high standards that have been maintained in the past and for members who have any concerns about any potential conflict of interest or with regard to types of declaration to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer at the earliest opportunity.

A very simple analysis of the figures contained in the report shows that the overall number of maladministration complaints against public authorities rose by 8% compared to the previous year. Local authorities continue to account for the largest proportion of complaints, the number of complaints recorded against them rising by 9.5%. However 72% of complaints are closed after initial consideration and did not merit an investigation. There were no complaints recorded against the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

It is interesting to note that with regard to complaints against Members there has been a 22% decrease in Code of Conduct complaints compared to 2012/2013. This is considered, at least in part, due to the introduction of local resolution procedures to deal with 'low level' member vs. member complaints. Members will recall that this authority did follow the guidance provided by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales and adopt such a procedure. I can report that since its introduction this procedure has not yet been invoked as no such complaints have occurred.

Members are asked to **NOTE** the contents of this report

(For further information, please contact John Parsons, Extension 4904)