

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2023
 title: OMBUDSMAN REPORT
 submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT - CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of Local Government Ombudsman (“LGO”) compliance outcome.

1.2 Relevance to the Council’s ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives - } The Council aims to be a well-managed Council.
- Corporate Priorities - } Complaints to the Ombudsman and the process of resolving complaints and responding to the Ombudsman’s investigation, helps to improve the way the Council delivers services.
- Other Considerations - }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 On 27 September 2022, Committee considered a report from the LGO dated 14 July 2022 (but embargoed until 18 August 2022). The recommendations of that report were that within 3 months of the report the Council should provide, the LGO with evidence that:

1. It has implemented its new policy on Reasonable Adjustments for disabled people;
2. It now keeps adequate records relating to decision on reasonable adjustments for disabled service users; and
3. its officers are aware of the Council’s new policy and its obligations under equalities legislation.

2.2 Prior to the meeting on 27 September 2022, the LGO had confirmed that items 1 and 2 were complete. The Council had also provided the LGO with details of refresher training on the Equalities Act 2010 to be provided to CMT and all Heads of Service by Bethan Evans along with details of how this training will be provided to all officers in each directorate thereafter by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Human Resources, and the relevant Head of Service. The LGO had also confirmed that this training was sufficient for it to confirm compliance with recommendation 3 and compliance would be confirmed once the training had taken place.

3. ISSUES

3.1 As agreed the Council carried out the training referred to above. Training was provided to CMT and all Heads of Services by an external training provider in two workshops on 18 October 2022 and 8 November 2022. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services then provided training to officer in each Directorate on 14,15,17 & 24 November 2022.

3.2 The completion of this training was reported to the LGO on 24 November 2022. On 5 December 2022 the LGO responded welcoming the action the Council has taken following the report and that the compliance outcome would be recorded as “Remedy complete and satisfied”

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Resources have been required in order to carry out the actions set out above in terms of officer time. This will be an ongoing commitment of resources to ensure that the Equality Act 2020 is embedded within the Council’s processes and that training is provided on a continuing basis.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – N/A.
- Political – N/A.
- Reputation – Taking on board the recommendations of the Ombudsman and taking steps to demonstrate and build upon the Council’s compliance with its equality duties will enhance the reputation of the Council.
- Equality & Diversity – The actions set out above will have a positive impact on equality and diversity and will ensure that the Council strives for excellence in customer service.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee should note the content of this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

For further information please ask for Mair Hill, extension 4418.