



Haverling

LONDON BOROUGH

CRIME & DISORDER COMMITTEE AGENDA

7.30 pm

**Thursday
18 September 2014**

**Town Hall, Main Road,
Romford**

Members 6: Quorum 3

COUNCILLORS:

John Wood (Vice-Chair)
David Durant (Chairman)
John Glanville

Linda Van den Hende
Garry Pain
Dilip Patel

**For information about the meeting please contact:
James Goodwin 01708 432436**

What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements. Each overview and scrutiny committee has its own remit as set out in the terms of reference but they each meet to consider issues of local importance.

They have a number of key roles:

1. Providing a critical friend challenge to policy and decision makers;
2. Driving improvement in public services;
3. Holding key local partners to account; and
4. Enabling the voice and concerns of the public.

The Crime and Disorder Committee considers issues by receiving information from, and questioning, Cabinet Members, officers and external partners, particularly the Responsible Authorities, i.e. Metropolitan Police, Metropolitan Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Authorities, and Primary Care Trusts, to develop an understanding of proposals, policy and practices. They can then develop recommendations that they believe will improve performance, or as a response to public consultations.

Committees will often establish Topic Groups to examine specific areas in much greater detail. These groups typically consist of between 3-6 Members and the review period can last for anything from a few weeks to a year or more to allow the Members to comprehensively examine an issue through interviewing expert witnesses, conducting research and site visits. Once the topic group has finished its work it will send a report to the Committee that created it and it will often suggest recommendations to the executive.

Terms of Reference

The areas scrutinised by the Committee are in exercise of the functions conferred by the Police and Justice Act 2006, Section 19-22 and Schedules 8 & 9.

AGENDA ITEMS

1 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(if any) – receive.

3 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Members are invited to disclose any pecuniary interest in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting.

Members may still disclose any pecuniary interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as correct the minutes of the meetings held on 15 July 2014 and authorise the Chairman to sign them.

5 METROPOLITAN POLICE UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Borough Commander on:

- General Performance;
- Use of Body cameras;
- Lessons learnt from Rotherham Inquiry;
- Increase in terrorism threat level – What does it mean for Havering?

6 REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD.

To receive a verbal update from the Chairman of the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

7 YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

To receive an oral report from officers.

8 PROPOSED TOPIC GROUP: ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN CRIME PREVENTION

To consider the establishment of a Topic Group to look at how the council and its partners engage with young people involved in crime.

9 COMMUNITY PAYBACK

To consider the attached report.

10 ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN LETTER. (Pages 9 - 18)

To consider the attached and identify any issues for further investigation.

11 URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any other item in respect of which the Chairman is of the opinion, by reason of special circumstances which shall be specific in the minutes that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

**Andrew Beesley
Committee Administration
Manager**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CRIME & DISORDER COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
15 July 2014 (7.30 - 9.30 pm)**

Present:

Councillors David Durant (Chairman), John Wood (Vice-Chair), John Glanville, Dilip Patel and Linda Van den Hende

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Pain

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

We were advised that under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 ‘Every local authority shall ensure that it has a committee (the “crime and disorder committee”) with power –

- a) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- b) To make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.’

“The responsible authorities” means the bodies and persons who are responsible authorities within the meaning given by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (authorities responsible for the crime and disorder strategies) in relation to the local authority’s area.’

The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. They work out how to deal with local issues like antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending. They annually assess local crime priorities and consult partners and the local community about how to deal with them.

For the London Borough of Havering the ‘responsible authorities are:

- The Metropolitan Police,
- London Borough of Havering,
- London Fire Brigade,
- London Probation Trust (and its successors), and
- Havering Clinical Commissioning Group.

Uniquely the Crime and Disorder Committee may require members or officers of the authority to attend before it to answer questions. Fortunately with the good working relationships built up in the Community Safety Partnership this power should not need to be used.

We have **noted** the report.

3 **CRIME STATISTICS - STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

We received a presentation on the findings from the Strategic Assessment.

In the eleven years ending March 2013 the borough had seen a fall in Notifiable offences from a high of 22,165 in 2003/4 to 16,438 in 2012/13. Long term trends indicated that violence during the night time economy, serious youth violence, weapon enabled crime and robbery, amongst others was declining, whilst burglary from a dwelling, theft from motor vehicles and alcohol related incidents were on the increase.

Worryingly sexual offences, domestic violence and hate crime had all seen increased levels of crime being recorded and reported by police in Havering.

Whilst rates of alcohol related crimes have risen over the past five years, in contrast to the national and regional trend, alcohol related violence associated with the night time economy had fallen.

Over 25% of those committing crime in Havering reside outside the borough.

We expressed concern that since the introduction of the new local policing model they no longer see neighbourhood police on the streets. The Borough Commander informed us that since the introduction of the new policing model crime had reduced by 8.7%. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams were organised in clusters and their hours of operation had been stretched to match the time of crimes. This did tend to mean the teams were less visible but were proving to be more successful in reducing crime.

The Borough Commander advised that since the new policing model had been introduced the fear of crime had risen despite the new system being more effective in reducing crime. The question for the police was how do we tackle the increase in fear of crime, without reducing the effectiveness of the policing. He did inform us that the Metropolitan Police would be reviewing the effectiveness of the new policing model later this year.

In response to questions from the committee the Borough Commander advised that Havering Police were 20% under strength in detectives but 20% over in P.C.'s. The down side was however that many of the P.C.'s were new. There were some areas of concern:

- Criminal damage where there had been a slight increase;
- Theft from person which had increased and there was a need to achieve a significant reduction to meet targets;
- Violence with injury – the police had seen an increase in domestic abuse, but they had also seen an increase in reporting;
- We had seen an increase in third party reporting.

We were advised that having considered the findings of the Strategic Assessment the Havering Community Safety Partnership had adopted the following strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes:

- Strategic Priorities
 - Serious Acquisitive Crime (Burglary Dwelling and Vehicle Crime)
 - Violence against Women & Girls (includes Domestic and Sexual Violence)
 - Town Centres and Public Spaces
- Cross Cutting Themes
 - Community engagement and public confidence
 - Managing Offenders in the community.

We have **noted** the report and thanked officers for the presentation.

4 **UPDATE ON TRANSFORMING REHABILITATION (PROBATION REFORMS)**

We were advised that the services provided by the London Probation Trust had been divided between two new organisations with effect from 1 June, 2014. The National Probation Service would deal with major risks whilst the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) would work closely with all other offenders.

The biggest issue facing the new organisations was IT with a number of glitches still to be sorted.

The National Probation Service unit covering Havering also covered Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge. Initially the team had been allocated 1,500 cases the majority of which would be managed in custody.

The local CRC covered both Havering and Barking and Dagenham. The CRC's would be run by separate companies and three companies had been short listed to run the CRC covering Havering. It was now likely that no decision would be taken until December.

Across the cluster the team would be expected to write up to 200 reports, although they were only resourced to write 100 reports. Similarly the case load for staff in Havering was between 40/50 when ideally they should be expected to cope with no more than 30. Efforts were being made nationally to deal with these issues.

Next year the new CRC's would assume responsibility for Community Payback.

One of the driving issues around the transformation was to ensure that those people serving sentences of less than 12 months would benefit from the service of a probation Officer. It now appeared that this might not be happening.

We thanked Carina Heckroodt for her presentation.

5 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOLLOWING THE TOPIC GROUP ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

In May, 2012 the Crime & Disorder Committee established a Topic Group to:

- Review the level of services delivered locally in respect of the effects of Domestic Violence on Young People and Children both as victims, witnesses and /or perpetrators;
- Look at what steps the Community Safety Partnership were taking to tackle the problem in the future;
- Identify good practice in other boroughs; and
- Make recommendations to the administration on areas which could be improved, if appropriate.

The outcomes of the Topic Group were reported to Cabinet on 25 September, 2013, with the following recommendations:

- To the Lead Member with responsibility for Housing and Public protection to review, possibly in 12-18 months' time how the new Allocations Scheme was supporting victims of Domestic Violence;
- To the Lead Members for Housing and Public Protection and Children and Learning to ensure that wherever possible school placements were taken into account before an alternative housing offer was made.

Officers advised that under the new allocations scheme there were three key ways in which the Council could help those experiencing Domestic Violence:

- Offer accommodation through the Allocation Scheme;
- Arranging a move out-of-the-borough through a reciprocal rehousing arrangement with another borough or housing association: or
- Providing alternative accommodation in an emergency using the Borough's homelessness duties and powers.

Officers informed the Committee that in their opinion the new allocation scheme was more straight forward and made it easier to assist victims of

domestic violence. Under the scheme those fleeing domestic violence were assumed to have an Emergency Rehousing need and therefore were afforded maximum priority. In these circumstances it was accepted that the need to move was so great that a direct offer would be made without the person needing to bid through the Choice-based Letting System.

To ensure the needs and aspirations of the household were taken into account when making an offer we operated a process of 'assisted offers.' Officers speak to the family and ascertain as much information as possible about their needs and requirements.

The police were involved in the process to ensure that the area(s) offered were safe.

Homes and Housing were a signatory to the East London Reciprocal Protocol. This was aimed to ease the process of moving across borough boundaries where an out-of-borough move was essential for the person's safety. In the last 12 months one person had been rehoused under this protocol.

Vulnerability due to fleeing violence was explicitly listed in the code of guidance accompanying the homelessness provisions of the housing Act 1996. In the year to June 2014 the Council had accepted a duty to rehouse 18 homeless households where DV was the main reason for their homelessness.

In the intermediate term, those homeless do to fleeing DV were housed in refuge accommodation, in or out of the borough, or one of the Council's hostels: placements were based on individual risk assessments.

Longer term accommodation was provided through the council's private sector leased option.

Officers advised that Homes and Housing Services worked closely with Children and Learning when they make 'assisted offers' through:

- The MASH – there was a housing officer placed in the team;
- THE Troubled Families team – there was a housing officer seconded to the team;
- The Children in need and Housing Panel – this was established by Housing and was chaired by Housing;
- The MARAC – Housing was a standing member;
- Day-to-day liaison between teams.

The key issue with regard to taking into account school places was the need to balance:

1. The need for the household to move to a place of safety, most typically away from their current location, with
2. The availability of council stock, most of which is in Harold Hill, Romford/Collier Row and Elm Park.

We have **noted** the report and were pleased to note that the new housing allocations scheme seems to provide more flexibility and a better service to victims of Domestic Violence.

We were also pleased to note that the liaison between Homes and Housing and Children and Learning was working well.

6 PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE FOR 2014/15 MUNICIPAL YEAR

We have **considered** the draft work programme submitted for our consideration and **adopted** the plan as set out below:

18 September, 2014	20 November, 2014	3 February, 2015	19 March, 2015	22 April, 2015
Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update	Work of the Neighbourhood Policing teams and Ward Panels	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update	Update on progress of MOPAC funded projects	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update
Review of the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Board	Update on the new ASB powers	Update on Community payback	Update on the impact of the new Licencing Strategy	Annual report
Engagement with young people engaged in criminal behaviour (Topic Group)	Update on progress of MOPAC funded projects	Report on crime over the Christmas and New year period	Potential Topic Group : Burglary	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update
		Partnership work to tackle Crime & Disorder.		

7 VISIT TO ROMFORD AND HORNCHURCH TOWN CENTRES

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee indicated that it would be a good idea if the visit to Romford and Hornchurch Town Centres included an invite to the members of the Licencing Committee. Once the school holidays were over we have asked officers to make the necessary arrangements.

8 STREET PASTORS

Officers advised that the Street Pastors now operated in Romford, on Friday and Saturday night and in Hornchurch on Friday nights.

9 CASHLESS BUSES

We have questioned whether the introduction of cashless buses creates a public safety issue. Officers advised that across London less than 1% of fares was paid in cash. The percentage in outer London was slightly higher.

Although it was not advertised there was provision for someone without sufficient credit to speak to the driver or guard to ensure they reached their destination safely. Bus drivers were briefed on how to deal with vulnerable persons.

We could ask the transport providers to monitor the effect and monitor the number of code red situations.

It was agreed to review the situation in six months time.

10 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

We reiterated our concerns at the decision of the Safer Neighbourhood Board to hold its meetings in private. We believe that all the meetings should be open to the public to ensure transparency.

Officers explained the support structure for the Safer Neighbourhood Board with public involvement available at Ward panel level. The Ward Panel chairs then meet at cluster level and elect a represent to serve and report to the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

Officers further advised that there was a lot less funding available to support the Safer Neighbourhood Board and this had to be taken in to account in organising meetings.

Initial results suggest that under the new structure the police were under greater scrutiny with MOPAC providing the Safer Neighbourhood Board with quarterly data.

The work plan envisaged the Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board attending our next meeting to provide an update on the work of the Board. We have noted the officers comments.

Chairman

ADJUDICATION & REVIEW COMMITTEE

6 August 2014

Subject Heading:

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN –
Annual Letter, for 2013-14**

CMT Lead:

Helen Edwards, Director Legal &
Governance

Report Author and contact details:

Grant Soderberg, Committee Officer
01708 433091
grant.soderberg@onesource

Policy context:

Ombudsman commentary on complaints
presented to her over the previous year to
assist the Council to ensure good practice
is maintained

Financial summary:

None directly associated with this report

**Has an Equality Impact Assessment
(EIA) been carried out?**

Not required.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

The Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) was received in July. The Annual Letter is the LGO's principle means of communicating a summary of its activity with every authority (361- not just local councils these days) across England and provides a break-down of complaints referred to her throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee note the contents of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter.
2. That the Committee decide whether the Letter should be sent to the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and their comments sought.
3. The Committee decide whether a letter of response should be sent to the Local Government Ombudsman about this year's letter.
4. The Committee decide whether the statistics provided by the LGO should be published on Calendar Brief along with the in-house commentary.

REPORT DETAIL

Background:

1. The Annual Letter has become the usual method of formally communicating with councils over the past few years. In previous years the Letter contained information to the Chief Executive and Council which was pertinent to Havering – including comments on some “significant” cases as well as an evaluation of trends, both in the borough and across the country.
2. Last year's Letter was bereft of detail because the LGO had changed its software and as this was implemented part-way through the year, the Ombudsman had two sets of data and argued that she was unable to amalgamate them into a coherent entity.
3. As this year's letter states, *“This is the first full year of recording complaints under our new business model so the figures will not be directly comparable to previous years”*.
4. The figure for complaints received provided within this is: **119** and the number of decisions is **121**. In previous years the LGO had provided a detailed summary of cases she considered had been dealt with and it had been possible to analyse them and reconcile the LGO's figures with the Council's. Clearly that was not possible for 2012-13, but, having contacted the LGO's office when this year's figures were made available, the Council has been provided with a set answer that “it is unable to provide more detailed analysis as this would detract from the Ombudsman's core objectives” and so it has not been possible to agree the Ombudsman's figures.
5. A detailed review of the statistics collected through the year show that there were only **72** complaints (the number of unique Ombudsman references used) which resulted in a total of 102 distinct contacts from the LGO in the form of enquiries (33), premature complaints referred to the Council for resolution

through its complaints procedure (11) and “investigations”. These were either an investigation – where the Council was asked to provide answers to questions (21) or Ombudsman decisions – where the Council was informed that the Ombudsman was not going to undertake an investigation, usually because the matter was outside her jurisdiction (37).

6. To illustrate the difference in perception which this year’s figures have produced, attention is drawn to the penultimate column in the “Decisions made” summary: “Referred back for local resolution” which is shown as being 60. The actual recorded figure for “referrals” (using the Ombudsman’s own terminology) is 11.
7. As reported to the Committee on previous occasions, some of these cases appeared in more than one form; indeed during 2013/14, there was one instance of a complaint starting as an enquiry, being referred back to the Council as “premature” and then appearing again as a further enquiry and ending as a decision. The majority of cases recorded during the year were single contacts (51 in total – though three individual complainants were involved in one complaint). The remainder (23 cases) involved two points of contact; mostly in the form of an enquiry followed by either a referral (premature) or a decision not to investigate or an investigation.
8. Last year, the Council had been informed that no statistics would be provided because the LGO had changed their business management software part-way through the period and meaningful data would not be possible. This year, the expectation was high that the information provided would be of a high quality and that the new software would make reconciliation easier than previously was the case.
9. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. The Council has been in contact with the Ombudsman and has been provided with a copy of her base statistics. These have been scrutinised and have confirmed that there are indeed issues which need to be addressed. For example: The LGO total of 119 contacts appears to have been understated by ten cases (in our records but not on the Ombudsman’s database).
10. In another example, two of the contacts recorded during 2013/14 by the Ombudsman do not appear in the Council’s figures as they were not notified of them until May/June 2014, well into the year after the Ombudsman’s stats. This sort of statistical recording – especially when the results are published without the Council having had an opportunity to question, challenge or correct, the data, is worrying and could have negative public relations impact.
11. Appended to this report is a copy of the LGO’s Annual Letter and a copy of the end summary provided to Members and Senior Management once final figures had been checked for the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.
12. Please note: the figures for each of the categories in “complaints and enquiries received” are not accurate. On their own they appear to be correct, but when compared to the base data, the following totals are found:

• Adult Care Services:	should be	10
• Benefits & Tax	should be	23
• Corporate & Others	should be	5
	but there are	4 “null” entries as well
not accounted for		
• Education & Children	OK at	5
• Environment & Public Protection:	should be	6
• Highways & Transport:	should be	18
• Housing	should be	31 and
• Planning	should be	17
	Total:	119

13. The net effect of these discrepancies weakens the value of the provision of these figures as they not only show authorities that they are only being provided with a proportion of the number of approaches made to the Ombudsman, but even the classification of those complaints are not accurate.
14. The Ombudsman accepts that this year there may have been unexpected issues and has invited comment and suggestions to improve the Annual Letter for future years. The Council will be accepting this invitation to do so.

The Future:

15. The difficulty faced by the Local Government Ombudsman this year continues to be in part caused by heavy cuts to her funding which have resulted in the number of Ombudsmen dealing with local government across England being reduced from three to one (currently Dr Jane Martin – reiterated in her letter this year), the reduction to its staffing levels, the departure from its headquarters at Millbank Tower to more modest accommodation in London – and with most of its activity now being concentrated in Coventry – and changes to its technology which appears to have led to the lack of supporting analysis continuing to be provided to councils.
16. As stated above, it was hoped (in last year’s report) that by the close of 2013/14 the reorganisation among the Ombudsman’s personnel and to its technological infrastructure would have led to more detailed data being once more becoming available to councils in order that proper comparisons can be made. This has clearly not been the case this year.
17. At the time this report was being written, the LGO contacted the Council and the Deputy Ombudsman’s office spent time in discussing some of the various issues this year’s Annual Letter had thrown-up. In particular the LGO will take Havering’s statistics and use them to conduct an audit of its own system. It will also consider how best it could – in future – express its findings in a way which is more “user-friendly”. It will see whether it is going to be possible to return to consulting with individual authorities ahead of making the figures public and it will also consider whether the Annual Letters can once again be more specific to individual authorities. It would seem that some good may yet emerge from this year’s problems.

Ombudsman Decision Categories

18. The current year has seen a major change in the way the Ombudsman records her decisions. This has caused something of a reaction among councils across the country because of the wider application of the term “maladministration” a term which (though undefined in law, has a specific set of prescribed actions which councils are obliged to take) was hitherto used sparingly and usually in conjunction with a formal Report. In the new terminology that remains reserved for the “maladministration with injury” for which a report has been issued, but the term “maladministration” now appears in six of the nine categories and it will be interesting to see how this increased use will be perceived by the public especially during a period – unprecedented in the past – where authorities everywhere are having to reduce, cut or put out to sub-contractor, the services it has come to identify with “normal” provision.
19. Because the Ombudsman has changed her terminology, it is inevitable that there will be some change in the terminology used in the reports produced in house and provided to staff and Members. It is hoped that – as far as possible – those changes will ensure that they remain easy to understand whilst reflecting a congruency with the Ombudsman’s language.
20. Whilst this restrained climate continues and if funding levels remain depressed, it is probable that councils – including Havering – will continue to receive a steady stream of enquiries followed either by referrals or Ombudsman decisions not to investigate.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There have been financial implications during the year 2012-13 because of Ombudsman activity. Any penalties and compensation is met from within existing budgets of the services affected.

Legal implications and risks: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Human Resources implications and risks: There are none associated with this report.

Equalities implications and risks: There are none associated with this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Electronic records of the complaints
LGO Annual Letter & Local Authority Report (attached)

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7 July 2014

By email

Ms Cheryl Coppell
Chief Executive
Havering London Borough Council

Dear Ms Cheryl Coppell

Annual Review Letter 2014

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2014. This is the first full year of recording complaints under our new business model so the figures will not be directly comparable to previous years. This year's statistics can be found in the table attached.

A summary of complaint statistics for every local authority in England will also be included in a new yearly report on local government complaint handling. This will be published alongside our annual review letters on 15 July. This approach is in response to feedback from councils who told us that they want to be able to compare their performance on complaints against their peers.

For the first time this year we are also sending a copy of each annual review letter to the leader of the council as well as to the chief executive. We hope this will help to support greater democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and ensure effective local accountability of public services. In the future we will also send a copy of any published Ombudsman report to the leader of the council as well as the chief executive.

Developments at the Local Government Ombudsman

At the end of March Anne Seex retired as my fellow Local Government Ombudsman. Following an independent review of the governance of the LGO last year the Government has committed to formalising a single ombudsman structure at LGO, and to strengthen our governance, when parliamentary time allows. I welcome these changes and have begun the process of strengthening our governance by inviting the independent Chairs of our Audit and Remuneration Committees to join our board, the Commission for Administration in England. We have also recruited a further independent advisory member.

Future for local accountability

There has been much discussion in Parliament and elsewhere about the effectiveness of complaints handling in the public sector and the role of ombudsmen. I have supported the creation of a single ombudsman for all public services in England. I consider this is the best way to deliver a system of redress that is accessible for users; provides an effective and comprehensive service; and ensures that services are accountable locally.

To contribute to that debate we held a roundtable discussion with senior leaders from across the local government landscape including the Local Government Association, Care Quality Commission and SOLACE. The purpose of this forum was to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist to strengthen local accountability of public services, particularly in an environment where those services are delivered by many different providers.

Over the summer we will be developing our corporate strategy for the next three years and considering how we can best play our part in enhancing the local accountability of public services. We will be listening to the views of a wide range of stakeholders from across local government and social care and would be pleased to hear your comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Local authority report – London Borough of Havering

For the period ending – 31/03/2014

For further information on interpretation of statistics click on this link to go to <http://www.lgo.org.uk/publications/annual-report/note-interpretation-statistics/>

Complaints and enquiries received

Local authority	Adult care services	Benefits and tax	Corporate and other services	Education and children's services	Environmental services and public protection and regulation	Highways and transport	Housing	Planning and development	Total
Havering LB	12	22	9	5	4	16	32	19	119

Page 17

Decisions made

Local authority	<u>Detailed investigations carried out</u>		Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Total
	Upheld	Not upheld					
Havering LB	11	10	6	30	4	60	121

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