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Mr J R White
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2 Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry
CV4 8JB



Our ref:
Your Ref:
Date: 13 July 2007

Contact: Greg Harlock
Direct Dial: 01954 713081
Direct email: greg.harlock@scambs.gov.uk

Dear Mr White

Re: Annual Letter 2006/07

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 2007 including your Annual Letter 2006/07.

I am very disappointed to see the Council's poor response times to your enquiries over 2006/07, and I appreciate and share your sentiment that this is unacceptable.

Earlier this year the Council revised its complaints procedure, a copy of which I enclose for your information. The new procedure was implemented on 1 April 2007 and involves a more robust monitoring and management of complaints and their outcomes.

My Executive Director, Steve Hampson, has previously attempted to contact your Assistant Ombudsman to discuss how the Council might work more effectively with the Local Government Ombudsman to resolve complaints promptly. Mr Hampson has, since receipt of your letter, spoken to Stephen Purser and is discussing with him the organisation of training for Council staff in September of this year, and for the Council to host your regional seminar in November at South Cambridgeshire Hall.

In addition, I have charged Mr Hampson with affecting an immediate improvement in the Council's response times to Local Government Ombudsman enquiries. I note that the Council's response for the first quarter of 2007/08 was 50 days and I fully expect this to improve significantly over the remaining three quarters of the year.

I hope that the above provides you with re-assurance that the Council recognises that its response times to complaints raised by the Local Government Ombudsman are not good enough, and that it has embarked upon an urgent process of improvement. In the mean time I am keen for the Council and your office to work together to promote a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities with the aim of improving standards of service to local people.

Yours sincerely

Greg Harlock
Chief Executive

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