

Broads Authority

09 May 2025

Agenda item number 14

Annual summary of formal complaints 2024/25

Report by Governance Officer

Purpose

This report summarises the formal complaints received by the Broads Authority, together with the outcome of those complaints, for the year 2024/25.

Recommended decision

To note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is considered good practice for public bodies such as the Broads Authority to have effective, transparent and accessible arrangements in place to deal with complaints, to adequately publicise their complaints procedures, to monitor responses and to make sure lessons are learnt from the outcome of complaints.
- 1.2. The Authority has a separate [Members Code of Conduct](#) and [complaints procedure](#), which clarifies the conduct expected by members and summarises how the Authority deals with such complaints. Following the establishment of a Standards Committee in September 2023, information on complaints under this process is contained within the committee's annual report to the Authority (item 16 on this agenda).
- 1.3. The formal complaints summarised in this report are those made by members of the public and service users during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, together with a summary of the Authority's responses.

2. Broads Authority complaints procedure

- 2.1. The Authority's formal complaints procedure is published on its website at [How to complain \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#). The procedure has a number of stages:
 - In the first instance, complainants are advised to contact the manager responsible for the area of work where they have a complaint or comment, so that the matter can be dealt with informally and as near as possible to the point of contact.
 - If it is not possible to resolve the complaint informally, the complainant may submit a formal complaint in writing. This complaint is investigated by the appropriate Director, who has a responsibility to reconsider the matter objectively

and professionally. The complainant will receive a detailed reply in writing identifying whether their complaint is upheld or not. The reply will also explain how to take the matter forward should the complainant remain dissatisfied.

- Finally, if the complainant is still dissatisfied as a result of the Director's response, they may ask for the matter to be reviewed by the Chief Executive, setting out the reasons why they believe the complaint has not been properly resolved at stage 2. The Chief Executive is required to review the complaint in an impartial manner and may, if he/she sees fit, seek advice from other officers such as the Monitoring Officer, and also seek direction from the appropriate committee, or from independent consultants or advisers if he/she believes that an external view would be helpful. If the formal complaint concerns action that the Chief Executive has taken, it will be reviewed by the Chairman of the Authority. This is the final stage of the Authority's formal complaints procedure.

2.2. The Authority seeks to provide a remedy to complaints when it is found at fault.

3. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

- 3.1. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) investigates complaints by members of the public who consider that they have been caused injustice by the administrative actions (maladministration) of local authorities and other bodies within their jurisdiction, which includes the Broads Authority.
- 3.2. The LG&SCO provides a free, independent and impartial service, and will normally only agree to investigate a complaint if the internal complaints procedures of the appropriate body have been exhausted.

4. Formal complaints 2024/25

- 4.1. Four formal complaints were made to the Authority in 2024/25. The subject matter and outcome of those complaints is set out in Appendix 1. Other complaints and issues resolved on an informal basis are not recorded.

5. Comparison with previous years

- 5.1. For comparison between the current year and previous years, the number of formal complaints and complaints to the LG&SCO can be found in the table below:

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Formal complaints	4	7	7	7	5	4	6
Complaints to LG&SCO	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Given the breadth and volume of the Authority's work, the number of formal complaints received in 2024/25 is considered to be small. Officers will continue to record and monitor formal complaints and seek to learn lessons from them, especially if the Authority's actions have fallen below expected standards

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Background papers: none

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: n/a

Appendix 1 – Summary of formal complaints for 2024/25

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Summary of complaint	Final response provided by	Stage reached and summary of response
Reedham Quay Moorings – permanent mooring of a boat	Director of Operations	<p>Stage 2 – A detailed response was provided to all of the points raised, advising that the boat in question is not and has never moored on the Broads Authority 24-hour mooring at Reeham Quay.</p> <p>The vessel has a private arrangement on land adjacent to the Authority's mooring, land owned by the Wellington Pub Company and managed by The Lord Nelson Public House.</p> <p>The use of the electrical pillar was not covered by the same legislation that covered 'over-staying' (the 24-hour mooring byelaw), so as long as the pillar is accessed as per the terms and electricity is paid for, then no byelaw offence will have been committed.</p> <p>Finally, the behaviours witnessed by the complainant and their family did not fall under legal powers that the Broads Authority has; these were matters best dealt with by the Police.</p>

Summary of complaint	Final response provided by	Stage reached and summary of response
Boundary issues at Mayfield, Broadview Road, Oulton Broad	Director of Strategic Services	Stage 2 – A detailed response was provided to all of the points raised, concluding that it was not considered that the Broads Authority had mishandled its representation to the Land Registry. The complainant was advised to contact the Land Registry direct if they were not happy with its verdict. In addition, the complainant was advised that land ownership was not a planning consideration and they were recommended to seek legal representation regarding their deeds.
Mutford Lock closure	Director of Operations	Stage 2 - A detailed response was provided to all of the points raised, concluding that the Authority had complied with the public notice period required by the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1989. In addition, the complainant's concerns were acknowledged in the context of the impact the closure would have, countered with an explanation of how complex the works were and the planned timing to minimise disruption.
Service of a Planning Contravention Notice	Chief Executive	Stage 3 – A detailed response was provided to all of the points raised, concluding that a minor error had occurred for the for the incorrect addressing of an email which the Development Manager has apologised.

16.04.2025