

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
<b>Report Subject</b>	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales “My Findings” Publication
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer Governance

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To consider the most recent summary of cases, related to alleged breaches of the Members’ Code of Conduct (the Code), as published by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) in their publication “My Findings” (My Findings).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee reviews the cases summarised in the appendix to this report, and identifies any issues or themes which it feels need to be raised with all councillors.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES’ “MY FINDINGS” PUBLICATION</b>
1.01	<p>The PSOW considers complaints that members of local authorities in Wales have breached the Code. There are four findings the PSOW can arrive at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) that there is no evidence of breach;</li> <li>(b) that no action needs to be taken in respect of the complaint;</li> <li>(c) that the matter be referred to the authority’s Monitoring Officer for consideration by the Standards Committee;</li> <li>(d) that the matter be referred to the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales (the APW) for adjudication by a tribunal. It should also be noted that occasionally an investigation may be discontinued, where circumstances change during the course of an</li> </ul>

	investigation and it is considered that it would not be in the public interest to continue to investigate.
1.02	The Ombudsman's website includes a tool called My Findings, which includes a search tool to allow summaries of cases to be accessed by reference to the relevant organisation, matter type, dates, case reference numbers, or outcome. In terms of matter types, cases are broken down into the following categories:-  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Integrity;</li> <li>b. Promotion of Equality and Respect;</li> <li>c. Disclosure or Registration of Interests;</li> <li>d. Duty to Uphold the Law; and</li> <li>e. Selflessness and Stewardship.</li> </ul>
1.03	The committee last considered the findings up to and including the 21st September 2022. The attached Appendix lists those findings between 22nd September 2022 and 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2023.
1.04	During the period the following investigations were concluded by the Ombudsman. Where a case was referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales or a Standards Committee then the outcome of any hearing is listed where the case had been concluded by the 10th August.
	<b>Classification</b>
	<b>No. Of Cases</b>
	Accountability and Openness
	0
	Disclosure or Registration of Interests
	2
	Duty to Uphold the Law
	1
	Integrity
	1
	Objectivity and Propriety
	1
	Promotion of Equality and Respect
	3
	Selflessness and Stewardship
	0
1.05	The cases are wide ranging in nature and the findings appear to be sensitive to/guided by the facts of each case. The committee may be able to identify themes or messages that it thinks would be helpful to communicate to councillors.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	N/A

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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4.01	N/A
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – PSOW My Findings Publication

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702344  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk">gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>PSOW</b> - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is independent of other bodies and has legal powers to investigate complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales and to investigate complaints that Members of local government bodies have broken their authority’s Code of Conduct.</p> <p><b>APW</b> – The Adjudication Panel for Wales is an independent tribunal whose function is to determine alleged breaches by elected and co-opted Members of Welsh County, County Borough and Community Councils, Fire and National Park Authorities, against their authority’s statutory Code of Conduct.</p>