

Joint Report of the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Council - 22 June 2017

COUNCILLORS LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Purpose:	To re-adopt the Councillors Local Dispute Resolution.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that: 1) The Councillors Local Dispute Resolution as outlined in Appendix A be readopted; 2) Councillors agree to attempt to resolve any grievances they may have with other Councillors through the internal mediation process whenever possible, before referring an issue to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
Report Author:	Huw Evans
Finance Officer:	Carl Billingsley
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council at its meeting on 9 June 2011 agreed a then innovative process of dealing with Councillor v Councillor Complaints. This process referred to as the "Councillors Local Dispute Resolution" is outlined by way of a flowchart set out **Appendix A**.

2. Councillors Local Dispute Resolution

- 2.1 The concept for the Councillors Local Dispute Resolution stemmed from the Standards Committee when they sought ways to improve standards for Councillors in the Council. As part of that process the Political Group Leaders, Presiding Member, Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services & Complaints Manager and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) met with the Standards Committee. Following detailed consideration and strong support from the PSOW the Local Dispute Resolution was drafted and approved by Council.
- 2.2 The Councillors Local Dispute Resolution puts in place an Informal Mediation Process with the aim of seeking to address an issue by way of an apology in the first instance, and then through a meeting of the Political Group Leaders.

2.3 In order for the process to work, Councillors must sign up to the system and agree to seek to resolve any grievances (Councillor v Councillor) they may have through the informal procedure prior to escalating to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3. Councillors Local Dispute Resolution

3.1 In the first instance a member who has a complaint should approach the Group Leader of the member who the complaint is about. If this approach is not effective the complaint is forwarded to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic Services and a meeting of the Councillor Mediation Panel (CMP) will be arranged. The CMP will aim to reach an agreed way forward to resolve the complaint.

3.2 The process aims to resolve complaints informally; however, it cannot be used to deal with complaints alleging that a Councillor has not declared a personal and / or prejudicial interest.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A Councillors Local Dispute Resolution “Councillor v Councillor Complaints”

Councillors Local Dispute Resolution “Councillor v Councillor Complaints”

