



Report of the Monitoring Officer

Standards Committee – 20 January 2023

Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Letter

Purpose:	To consider the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) letter regarding minor changes to procedure
Policy Framework:	Standards Committee Terms of Reference – Council Constitution.
Consultation:	Legal, Access to Services and Finance.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the Standards Committee: 1) Consider the PSOW letter dated 10 November 2022 attached at Appendix A and note the minor changes to procedure.
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1. Background

- 1.1 All Chairs of Standards Committee's in Wales have been sent a letter from the PSOW relating to minor changes to the PSOW Code of Complaints guidance and process.
- 1.2 A copy of the letter received and dated 10 November 2022 is attached at Appendix A.

2. Key issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The attached letter advises that to support Standards Committees some minor changes have been made to the PSOW Code of Conduct Complaints Guidance and processes.
- 2.2 The PSOW will continue to share its decisions with Monitoring Officers as required under legislation. However the PSOW will now be sharing the complaint and their decision in a stand alone decision notice to facilitate the Monitoring Officer being able to share the complaint information with the

Standards Committee where Monitoring Officers consider it appropriate to do so.

- 2.3 In addition, since June 2022, the PSOW has been trialling a new approach as to how Members are informed about complaints made against them. Previously, the PSOW would inform the Member about whom the complaint was made and the Monitoring Officer/Clerk of the Community/Town Council as soon as received. The PSOW now informs the relevant parties at the point where the PSOW either declines to investigate or decides to investigate the complaint. During the trial the PSOW has found that approach speeds up the process.
- 2.4 The letter also urges Members to use any local arrangements for dealing with Member v Member complaints. The PSOW is of the view that this has proved very effective as a means of resolving cases.
- 2.5 The Committee will also note that the PSOW intends to engage with the Chairs of the Standards Committees through the National Forum for Standards Committee when established.

3. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 3.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A – PSOW letter dated 10 November 2022