

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>7 MARCH 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE – HEARINGS PROCESS</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the policy framework. The procedure for the investigation of complaints is supplementary to the procedural rules applicable to the Standards Committee.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>To note the adopted hearing procedure to determine Code of Conduct complaints which are referred to the Standards Committee.</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to note the adopted procedure to determine Code of Conduct complaints which are referred to the Standards Committee to ensure that matters are dealt with fairly and efficiently.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Under the Local Government Act 2000 all allegations and breaches of the Code of Conduct are submitted to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for investigation in the first instance.
- 2.2 The Ombudsman may determine a matter be referred to the Authority's Monitoring Officer for investigation or may, as in this case, undertake the investigation and refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for consideration by the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 The Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committee) (Wales) Regulations 2001, as amended, set out the functions of the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee in relation to investigations and determinations.

## **3. Current situation / proposal**

3.1 Attached as **Appendix 1** is the adopted procedure that the Committee will follow where it is required to make decisions about the conduct of Councillors, following investigations by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales or the Council's Monitoring Officer. If there is any conflict between this document and any statutory requirements then those statutory requirements will prevail. The Monitoring Officer will advise the Committee as to process.

3.2 All Elected Members receive training on the Code of Conduct as part of their induction training.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

#### **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

5.2 Compliance with the Code of Conduct by Members ensures the Council maintains a high standard of behaviour and conduct and thereby encouraging and promoting democracy throughout society thereby contributing to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

#### **6. Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change implications.

#### **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

#### **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members note the adopted procedure to be applied to hearings before the Committee attached as **Appendix 1**.

**Background documents:**

None