

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM**

**22 JULY 2013**

**REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**LOCAL RESOLUTION PROTOCOL**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Town and Community Council Forum of the Local Resolution Protocol recently adopted by the Council.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority**

- 2.1 There are no direct links to the Corporate Improvement Plan and Corporate Priorities.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Town and Community Council Forum will be aware that the formal route for complaints relating to the conduct of another Member would be for the complaint to be made directly to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- 3.2 Around a third of those complaints referred to the Ombudsman are made by a Member against a fellow Member and many of these complaints relate to low-level behavioural issues. Many of these, if investigated by the Ombudsman would not result in a sanction being imposed.
- 3.3 In September 2012, the Ombudsman revised his Guidance for Members to encourage informal local resolution of low-level complaints in order to avoid the need for a formal investigation by the Ombudsman and to avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation which might impact on personal relationships and potentially cause wider damage to corporate governance or the reputation of the Council.

**4. Current situation / proposal**

- 4.1 The Ombudsman has stressed his wish that Councils (including Town and Community Councils) introduce a local resolution procedure.
- 4.2 At its meeting of Council on 3 April 2013, the Council approved the adoption of the Local Resolution Protocol (attached as Appendix A) which sets out what is expected of Members and the procedure by which complaints may be dealt with in-house. Members will still have the ability to take a complaint directly to the Ombudsman if they so wish and legislation does not formally create the ability for sanctions to be imposed under a local protocol; however, the Monitoring Officer has recommended that Members agree to abide by the protocol.

4.3 The Town and Community Council Forum may wish to note the attached local protocol for the determination of low-level complaints without the need for referral to the Ombudsman.

4.4 The Standards Committee has recommended that the Monitoring Officer offers to support Town & Community Councils in a similar capacity to that undertaken within the BCBC Local Resolution Protocol and to offer an independent mediation between Members of Town & Community Councils.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules**

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 It is recommended that the Town and Community Council Forum note the content of this report and the offer of support of the Monitoring Officer

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## **Background Documents**

None