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Bridgend County Borough Council



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*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhwch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*



**Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate**  
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513  
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

**Dyddiad/Date:** Thursday, 2 July 2026

Dear Councillor,

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Standards Committee will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 8 July 2026 at 10:00.**

**AGENDA**

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence from Members.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council on 1 September 2008.

3 Approval of Minutes

To receive for approval the Minutes of 12/02/2026

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4 Standards of Conduct

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5 Annual Report

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**By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £0.44 in printing costs**

6 Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Rule 4 of the Council's Procedure Rules, and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

**Note: This will be a Remote meeting and Members and Officers will be attending remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, please contact [cabinet\\_committee@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk) or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.**

Yours faithfully

**K Watson**

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

P Baker

M Daley

HJ David

JE Evans

R Lynch

S Maughan

G Thomas

MJ Williams

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2026**  
**AT 10:00**

Present Virtually

S Maughan – Chairperson

JE Evans  
G Walter

M Daley  
P Baker

MJ Williams  
R Lynch

G Thomas

Officers:

Laura Griffiths  
Michael Pitman  
Oscar Roberts

Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services  
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services  
Temporary Democratic Services Officer - Committees

**192. Declarations of Interest**

Decision Made	The following declarations of interest were made:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Councillor Martin Williams declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a member of St Brides Minor Community Council, which is the subject of that report.</li><li>• Councillor Graham Walter declared a personal interest in Item 6 as his partner is a member of Porthcawl Town Council. This declaration was later declared as prejudicial during the discussion on Item 4, during which Councillor Walter left the meeting for this item.</li><li>• Councillor Gavin Thomas declared a personal interest in Item 6 as the Chair of Maesteg Town Council.</li></ul>
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**193. Apologies for Absence**

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Decision Made	There were no apologies for absence.
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**194. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the 06/02/2025, 26/02/2025, 30/05/2025, 14/07/2025 and 22/07/2025 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of the title for the Chairperson Sue Maughan to remove Cllr next to her name, which was incorrectly input on a number of minutes.</p> <p>A previous resolution was noted by the Committee of suggesting future Member training. A member of the Committee suggested that the Local Resolution Protocol may form a beneficial training subject, which was agreed to by the Chairperson. Dispensations were also raised as a potential useful topic for training.</p>
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**195. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2024/25**

Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, was to present to the Standards Committee the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2024/25 for noting. The report outlined a total of 58 complaints against the Authority during 2024/25 and 59 complaints during 2023/24.</p> <p>The Committee posed questions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why only 28% of recommendations made to BCBC have been complied with during the prescribed timeline, and whether those recommendations can be revealed to the Committee.</li> <li>• Whether the Committee can gain further insight into a Town and Community Council with a high volume of code of conduct complaints, and potential actions that can be taken.</li> <li>• Whether the Standards Committee could compose a letter to the Chair of a Town and Community</li> </ul>
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	<p>Council indicating their awareness of high complaint numbers and offering possible support.</p> <p>These questions were addressed by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, who agreed to research the reasons for the low compliance figure with the Complaints team and send an update to the Committee when that is known.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Committee noted the report.</p> <p>The Committee further recommended that a letter be sent from the Monitoring Officer to Porthcawl Town Council indicating awareness of their high number of code of conduct complaints and offering any support as appropriate.</p>
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**196. Local Resolution Protocol**

Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, was to present to the Standards Committee the revised Local Resolution Protocol for consideration following a review carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) of all the local resolution protocols of principal local authorities across Wales and recommendations made by the All Wales Monitoring Officers’ Group.</p> <p>The Committee posed questions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether Town and Community Councils have similar protocols.</li> <li>• Whether measures could be put in place for greater awareness of this protocol.</li> <li>• The threshold at which the Monitoring Officer would be obliged to refer complaints to the PSOW rather than utilizing the protocol.</li> <li>• Whether Members have been able to contribute towards the drafting of the protocol.</li> <li>• Whether the Authority keeps statistics or analyses the minor complaints dealt with under the protocol. Whether attendance at training could be recorded for Town and Community Council Members.</li> <li>• Whether the numbers of Town and Community Council Members who have not undergone mandatory and optional training could be shared with the Committee.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the Group Leaders could be asked about their progress encouraging high standards of conduct and attendance at Member training with their respective groups at the next Standards Committee at which they are present.</li> </ul> <p>These questions were addressed by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, who agreed to recommend several actions surrounding the protocol.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Committee agreed the revised Local Resolution Protocol for submission to full Council for approval.</p>
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**197. Updates from Observing Town and Community Council Meetings**

Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, was to update the Standards Committee following Members of this Committee observing meetings of Town and Community Councils. Three observations have taken place in recent months of Town and Community Councils, with any relevant observations noted.</p> <p>The Committee posed questions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schedule of visits compiled by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services and circulated to the Committee.</li> <li>• Whether a rota or schedule of Committee members viewing meetings could be arranged.</li> <li>• Whether the information contained within this report is in the public domain, and whether Clerks and Town and Community Council Members are informed of the publication of these observations.</li> <li>• Succession planning for Town and Community Clerks.</li> <li>• Whether Members of the Committee who are not independent can also view Borough Council meetings as part of these observations.</li> </ul> <p>These questions were addressed by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, who agreed to share any feedback from observations of Town and Community Councils with the Clerks once they have been published. The Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services also clarified that assistance with succession planning for Town and Community Council Clerks would be outside the Committee’s remit.</p>
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	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Committee noted the report.
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**198. Appointment of Vice-Chairperson**

Decision Made	<p>The purpose of this report, presented by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services, was to appoint a Vice Chairperson for the Standards Committee.</p> <p>No nominations were received. It was noted that two of the Independent Members are newly appointed to the Committee and may wish to take further time to become familiar with the role and its responsibilities. In addition, two other members indicated that they were unable to commit to the role at this time due to other commitments.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the appointment of a Vice Chair be deferred to the next meeting.</p>
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

**199. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	12 February 2026

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 11:27.

**This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**



<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>8 JULY 2026</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>STANDARDS OF CONDUCT</b>
<b>Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member</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 and Procedure Rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>To receive reports from the political Group Leaders in the Council outlining their compliance with their duties in relation to high standards of conduct.</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to the Standards Committee the reports of the three political Group Leaders of the Council outlining their compliance with their duties in relation to high standards of conduct.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 On 30 September 2022 the Committee received a report on the new duties placed upon Standards Committees and political Group Leaders under the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021.
- 2.2 A new duty under the Act is placed on the leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 a political group is constituted where the Proper Officer is notified of two or more members who wish to be treated as a political group, the name of the group and the name of the one member of the group who is to act as its leader. The Proper Officer has been informed of the following political groups and leaders:
- Labour – Group Leader: Cllr John Spanswick, Leader of the Council
  - Bridgend County Independents – Group Leader: Cllr Amanda Williams
  - Democratic Alliance Group – Group Leader: Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
- 2.3 The duty recognises those in positions of leadership and influence within a principal council should have responsibility for combating bullying and harassment amongst elected members and council staff and must act as a positive role model. Among

other things, this duty is designed to support Welsh Government's diversity in democracy agenda and actions in its Race Equality Action Plan. The 2021 Act also requires that a leader of a political group, must co-operate with the Standards Committee in the exercise of the Committee's functions.

- 2.4 Standards Committees play an important role in supporting members, individually and collectively, to develop and maintain a culture which embraces high standards of conduct. The 2021 Act also extends the specific functions of a Standards Committee to include monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups with the new duty imposed on them by the Act to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group.

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

- 3.1 Group Leaders are required to report compliance with their duty to the Standards Committee. This could take the form of a short letter or report at a frequency agreed by the political Group Leaders in the Council and its Standards Committee. Group Leaders should also report any serious concerns about members' behaviour which has not been remedied by informal actions, in line with the requirement in the Code for councillors to report breaches. The Council's political Group Leaders and the Standards Committee have previously agreed on the form and frequency of a report from each Group Leader to the Committee.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee now consider each report submitted by the Group Leaders (attached as **Appendix 1**) and provide feedback. The Group Leaders have been invited to attend the Committee meeting on 8 July 2026. The Chair may also wish to meet with Group Leaders privately and periodically to review behaviour.

### **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 impact 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 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

**6. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change and nature 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 the Committee consider the reports and provide feedback to the Group Leaders.

**Background documents:**

None

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## Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct

Report by:	Cllr John Spanswick		
Political Group:	Labour Group		
No. of members:	26	No. trained on Code:	100%
For the period:	May 2025 – May 2026		
<b><u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u></b>			
	<b>Informal</b>	<b>Local Resolution</b>	<b>PSOW</b>
Public			
Officers			
Councillors			
<b><u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u></b>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards;</b></li> <li>- <b>encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards;</b></li> <li>- <b>ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee;</b></li> </ul>			
<p>All members of my group have attended the Code of Conduct training and as far as possible all have completed the online mandatory training modules. However there has been some concerns around the online training modules not always being easy to access and not suitable for everyone.</p> <p>I continue to encourage members to take up training in relation to committees they may not currently sit on but may be required to in the future. There is ongoing work with group members to discuss their roles and help identify future training needs to help with their personal development plan.</p> <p>Where appropriate Group members are encouraged to attend external training and workshops that may be suitable such as those provided by the WLGA and APSE.</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings;</b></li> <li>- <b>promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution;</b></li> <li>- <b>promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;</b></li> <li>- <b>attend a meeting of the Council’s Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;</b></li> </ul>
<p>At the start of group meetings we have introduced a standing item on the subject of ‘Member Conduct and Confidentiality’. There is a Group Whip system whereby any issues can be raised confidentially with support and guidance offered as appropriate. This is given priority within my Group as we need to ensure we are promoting high standards of conduct and integrity as that is what is expected by the public as their democratically elected representatives.</p> <p>There have been occasions where I feel the conduct of some opposition members has fallen below an acceptable standard when in Council meetings, whereby the Mayor (as Chair of the meeting) is not always respected. There have also recently been some unfortunate comments on social media against my cabinet members which were totally untrue and took place during the recent election period with an attempt to try influence how people would cast their vote. I duly discussed this with the Group Leader (Cllr.A.Williams) and the Monitoring Officer and it was made clear that this type of behaviour is not acceptable.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;</b></li> <li>- <b>work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.</b></li> </ul>
<p>I have an open-door policy for all members and in particular Group Leaders and continue to arrange monthly Group Leaders meetings. There have been occasions over the past year when we have failed to meet on a regular basis and communication has not been as good as it should be. Therefore, I will look to agree a schedule of dates for Group Leaders meeting over the next 12 months so that we have them in our calendars so that we can plan accordingly. Should there be any future recommendation from the Standards Committee then I will endeavour to ensure that they are complied with in full.</p>

## **Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct**

Report by:	Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas		
Political Group:	Democratic Alliance		
No. of members:	8	No. trained on Code:	100%
For the period:	July 2025 – June 2026		
<b><u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u></b>			
	<b>Informal</b>	<b>Local Resolution</b>	<b>PSOW</b>
Public	0	0	0
Officers	0	0	0
Councillors	0	0	0
<b><u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u></b>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards;</li> <li>- encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards;</li> <li>- ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee;</li> </ul>			
<p>I continue to espouse the Nolan Principles of public life and adhere to the code of conduct, and expect the same of members of my group. I regularly support them in informal queries they may have regards the workings of council or to resolve any issues.</p> <p>Members of my group have largely remained on the same committees as the previous year (changes made in 2024/25) so all relevant training has been complete. Members are expected to prioritise any training that emerges, either as a new opportunity or as a refresher.</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings;</li> <li>- promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution;</li> <li>- promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;</li> <li>- attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;</li> </ul>
<p>No members of my group have been the subject of any complaints that are formal or requiring local resolution, since the beginning of this council term.</p> <p>I am suitably content that the conduct of my members – with colleagues, officers and in public - remains in conjunction with the Code.</p> <p>I remain ready and willing to work with the Monitoring Officer, fellow GLs and the Standards Committee should any issues arise.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;</li> <li>- work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.</li> </ul>
<p>I regularly attend Group Leaders' meetings and enjoy a constructive relationship with both fellow Leaders.</p> <p>I have – and will continue to – raise issues informally with the Monitoring Officer and at Group Leader meetings when I believe standards of conduct or behaviour have fallen short of what residents would expect I am equally content for fellow GLs to raise issues informally with me, should they concern my members.</p>

# Agenda Item 5

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>8 JULY 2026</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT</b>
<b>Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member</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 and Procedure Rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, the Standards Committee must make an Annual Report to the Council.</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Committee to approve its Annual Report for 2025/26 to be reported to Council.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee must prepare an Annual Report to include:

- a description of how the Committee has discharged its functions;
- a summary of any reports and recommendations that were referred to the Standards Committee under Chapter 3 of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- a summary of the actions that the Committee has taken following consideration of the reports and recommendations referred to above;
- a summary of any notices that were given to the Standards Committee under Chapter 4 of Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- the Committee's assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group and to cooperate with the Committee in the exercise of its functions;
- any recommendations which the Committee considers it appropriate to make to the Council about any matters which falls within the Committee's functions.

## 3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The Annual Report for the Standards Committee for 2025/26 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

#### **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 impact 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 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

#### **6. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change and nature 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 the Committee approve the Annual Report for reporting to Council.

#### **Background documents:**

None

## Standards Committee Annual Report – 2025/26

### Membership

The Standards Committee is made up of Independent Members, one Town and Community Council representative and two County Borough Councillors. These are:

#### **Independent Members:**

Sue Maughan (Chair)

Peter Baker

Roy Lynch

Martyn Daley

Janet Evans

#### **Borough Councillors:**

Cllr Martin Williams

Cllr Graham Walter

#### **Town and Community Council representative:**

Cllr Gavin Thomas

### Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

This is the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 to 31 March 2026. The Committee seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the Council. Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Committee must make an annual report to the Authority describing how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

### The Roles of the Standards Committee

The role and functions of the Committee are set out within Section 8 of the Council's Constitution. This covers such matters as:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members
- Monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy
- Considering reports submitted by the Monitoring Officer and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- Granting dispensations in accordance with the Regulations
- Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the Council with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group.

The Standards Committee generally meets quarterly throughout the year.

### Recruitment

On 20 July 2022, Council approved that the membership of the Committee be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) be appointed to the Committee. The previous two vacancies on the Committee following the resignation of Mr Shawn Cullen, Independent Member and the term of office ceasing for Mr Phillip Clarke,

Independent Member have now been filled with Mr Martyn Daley and Mrs Janet Evans being appointed to the Standards Committee in July 2025 as Independent Members.

### Work of the Committee

The work of the Committee during 2025/6 has continued to centre on the following main areas:

#### **Maintaining high standards**

The Council has ensured that Members have been trained to understand:

- Members' Code of Conduct
- Importance of the Register of Member Interests. The declaration of interest forms are published on the Council's website
- The Investigation of Complaints and a local hearing procedure

#### **Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups**

The provisions in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 build on this by supporting a culture where members have a responsibility to act in a manner which respects and values all people. A duty under the Act is placed on the leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 a political group is constituted where the Proper Officer is notified of two or more members who wish to be treated as a political group, the name of the group and the name of the one member of the group who is to act as its leader. At the Annual Meeting in May 2025, the Proper Officer was informed in writing of the following political groups and leaders:

- Labour – Group Leader: Cllr John Spanswick, Leader of the Council
- Bridgend County Independents – Leader of Largest Opposition Group: Cllr Amanda Williams
- Democratic Alliance Group – Group Leader: Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas

The three group leaders were invited to the meeting of the Committee on 22 July 2025 to present reports outlining their compliance and support with the new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

Looking ahead, a report will be prepared and submitted to the Committee annually from each individual Group including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and other relevant information. The reports will be shared with the Monitoring Officer prior to being submitted to the Committee and individual Group Leaders will be invited to attend the Committee when their reports are being considered.

### Code of Conduct Complaints

On 30 May 2025 the Committee convened to determine a complaint of an alleged breach of the Member Code Of Conduct against Cllr Lisa Lewis of Brackla Community Council. The Member was alleged to have breached paragraphs 4(b) and 6(1)(a) of the Code of Conduct, which comprise: 4(b) - Members must show respect and consideration for others. 6(1)(a) - Members must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute. The Committee resolved that the Member should be censured in relation to the above breaches of the Code of Conduct. This is in accordance with their powers under s 9(1)(c) of the Local Government Investigations

(Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Committee made recommendations that discussions take place around training opportunities for the Member to add real value to the contribution she can make to Brackla Community Council and to ensure she has the relevant skills in a challenging environment. The Committee also recommended that there needs to be a revisit around Code of Conduct training. The Monitoring Officer will also offer their support to other Members of Brackla Community Council.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) received the following Town and Community Council Code of Conduct Complaints for 2025/26. At the time of this report, a breakdown of those complaints is not available but will be published as part of the PSOW Annual Letter in September 2026.

	Received	Closed	Closed at Investigation
Accountability and Openness	2	1	-
Disclosure and registration of interest	10	10	-
Integrity	2	2	-
Promotion of equality and respect	2	4	1
Selflessness and stewardship	2	2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>

#### Local Resolution Protocol (LRP) Process

In 2025, the PSOW carried out a review of the LRPs of each of the principal local authorities in Wales. The review identified a varied approach to local resolution in terms of:

- the type of complaints which were deemed to be ‘low level’
- the role of the Standards Committee or members of it
- the inclusion of an agreement not to refer a matter to PSOW whilst the protocol is in operation
- reference to the statutory duties on Group Leaders in managing standards of conduct and
- the outcomes available when the protocols are used.

As part of its review, the PSOW sought Counsel’s opinion which was shared with Monitoring Officers for consideration. A Working Group of Monitoring Officers was established to review the advice note and the Group subsequently recommended that each local authority should review its LRP to reflect Counsel’s advice.

At its meeting on 12 February 2026, the Standards Committee approved revisions to the Local Resolution Protocol adopted by the Council and noted that it continues to provide a helpful process for resolving relatively ‘low-level’ behavioural complaints made by County Borough Members about other Members, in a timely and proportionate way.

### Dispensations

The Standards Committee has statutory power to grant dispensations to Members with a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter, to allow them to participate in a decision regarding that matter, in appropriate circumstances, which are set out in statutory regulations.

A dispensation was granted to a Member of Council on 14 July 2025 to enable him to speak at a Community Council meeting as a matter of clarification in relation to minutes of a previous meeting held on 19 June 2025 whereby the Member declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

### Other Activities

In addition to the above activities the Standards Committee also:

- Received and noted the Public Services Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2024-25;
- Received and approved the Council's revised Local Resolution Protocol;
- Noted update reports following observations of Town and Community Council meetings;
- Received reports from the Group Leaders outlining their compliance and support with their new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

### Looking ahead

Looking ahead, much of the work of the Committee is demand led.

- The Committee will identify and support the provision of regular training and refresher events for Elected Members of the Council. This will be particularly relevant in the lead up to and following the local elections scheduled for May 2027;
- Observation of Council and Committee Meetings – the Standards Committee will continue to observe proceedings at Town and Community Council, Council and Committee meetings to give feedback on observations and inform its work priorities;
- Meetings with Group Leaders - to facilitate ongoing engagement with representatives from all political groups and to identify how the approach code of conduct matters in their political group;
- Code of Conduct, Member Training and Development – the Standards Committee will consider the need for any further training on the Members' Code of Conduct focussing on Town and Community Councils;
- To review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Agenda and Minutes of the Standards Committee, together with all Reports considered at meetings are published online.