

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 FEBRUARY 2025
Report Title:	INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INVESTIGATIONS BY THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	To present to the Committee the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Investigation Report.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to the Committee the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Investigation Report into Code of Conduct Complaints published on 27 September 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 In May 2024 following substantiated complaints that a staff member had been making inappropriate and unacceptable political social media posts, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) commissioned an Independent Review to evaluate the PSOW's Code of Conduct Team's processes, delegations and decisions related to complaint assessment and investigation by the Team. Dr Melissa McCullough, who serves as Commissioner for Standards for the Northern Ireland Assembly as well as for the Jersey and Guernsey States Assemblies, led the Review.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Report was published on 27 September 2024 (**Appendix 1**) and provided the following key recommendations:
- Documenting Political Affiliations
 - Notification of the accused Member
 - Quality Assurance for Investigating Officer Decisions
 - Accused Member's right to comment
 - Oversight of the Code Team Member's Delegated Authority
 - Clarification Amendments

- Public Interest Considerations

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

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 the Committee note the report.

Background documents:

None