

Appendix 3

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>			
Report by:	Cllr Amanda Williams		
Political Group:	Bridgend County Independents		
No. of members:	13	No. trained on Code:	13 (100%)
For the period:	11 th July 2024 to 4 th July 2025		
<u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u>			
	Informal	Local Resolution	PSOW
Public			3 (no investigation for any of them)
Officers			
Councillors			
<u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee; 			
<p>I continue to raise training at our group meetings and I encourage all members to attend any training that is offered. Despite assurances that the online training is fit for those with visual problems, I continue to have concerns and I would like officers to sit down with those who have issues to see exactly what the problem is. I have completed all of the online training, but I found it extremely difficult to navigate some pages.</p> <p>All nominees to committees have undertaken the relevant training for that committee.</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings; - promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution; - promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity; - attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards; - work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council. 	<p>We continue to have a monthly group meeting where we have an open and honest discussion as a group and I continue to have an open-door policy where any member can contact me for advice or to discuss issues as needed.</p> <p>I said in my last report that civility and respect are core and that I strongly believed that this had improved greatly over the previous 12 months. However, I feel that the general behaviour in the council chamber has deteriorated, with a tit for tat culture and a childish banging of tables and applauding. I have discussed this with the leader of the council and the monitoring officer.</p> <p>The increase in fake profiles, targeting independent councillors, that I raised last time have continued to increase with the onslaught of false allegations and vexatious attacks. Unfortunately, the police have taken no action against those who are known, despite clear hate crime such as antisemitism and them describing the contents of my house as they share openly that they have been looking into my window. A number of my group continue to be targeted and there is no support for them. Some councillors are also commenting on these social media posts adding fuel to the fire. I have asked my group not to comment on any such posts. However, I do feel that unless this behaviour is taken seriously, the matter will escalate and there could be harm. As I outlined previously, I have already had my car tyre slashed, had my CCTV cut, had people sharing online that I am home alone with my children and I have even had individuals approaching my youngest child in a community event and making them cry. Councillors are continually told they should have a thick skin, but they should not have to put up with this. This is over and above what is reasonable.</p> <p>Complaints about community councillors are also increasing and those members of my group, who are at a community council level also, have raised that some community councils are extremely toxic. Whilst this is outside of my control, I do have concerns that continued poor behaviour by all in certain councils and failure to adhere to council rules will inevitably affect BCBC. As I have raised before politics is leading to increasingly dirtier tactics and continued attempts to entrap individuals or pressure them into resigning. I recommended in my previous report that the standards committee needs to take a closer look at town and community councils, particularly those with a high number of complaints against those who do this role for either no money or for a very small personal allowance. I am not aware that these councils have had any contact from the standards committee to date.</p> <p>I have continued to have a monthly meeting with the Chief Executive where we can discuss openly and frankly any concerns about behaviour and comments made and also work on building relationships. I have also met several times with the monitoring officer to discuss behaviour and I believe that our working relationship has improved vastly over the past 12 months.</p>

I am more than happy to implement any recommendations put forward to me. At the last meeting I attended it was suggested that behaviour should be a standing agenda item in group meetings and this is now the case with my group. Apart from general behaviour, I continue to remind my group about process as well as the content of emails.

I continue to have a good relationship with Cllr Ross Thomas and I believe that we work well together. Unfortunately, there have been instances where I have felt bullied by the labour leader, so much so that I felt unable to attend monthly group leader meetings, due to fear of abuse. I have met with the labour group leader last month to talk through these concerns and I explained how I was made to feel in meetings and in the tone of emails and we did agree to draw a line under the matter. I have not attended the two group leader meetings since that agreement as both have been cancelled.