

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2015

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS – PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the Ombudsman's new public interest test.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 There are no direct links to the Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 16th January 2015 the Committee received a report informing them of proposals made by the Ombudsman to revise the Guidance on the Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members.
- 3.2 The Ombudsman had proposed that a further public interest test be considered when deciding whether to investigate a complaint or whether to continue an investigation of a breach of the Code to the stage of referring the matter to the Adjudication Panel for Wales.
- 3.3 The Monitoring Officer provided feedback to the Ombudsman's Office regarding the proposal to revise the Guidance on the Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. A copy of the Monitoring Officer's letter is attached as **Appendix 1**.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 The Ombudsman's Office has now issued the new test (**Appendix 2**) which has changed as a result of the comments received from Monitoring Officers. The main change is that the issue of whether a sanction is likely to be applied has been rolled into the second stage test, as one of the public interest factors to be weighed up.
- 4.2 The Ombudsman has also determined that if it is felt that no sanction is likely, he will not refer cases to the Monitoring Officer.

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.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report.

Contact Officer: P A Jolley
Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

Telephone: (01656) 643106

E-mail: Andrew.Jolley@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Level 2,
Civic Offices,
Angel Street,
Bridgend,
CF31 4WB

Background Documents

None