

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Standards Committee**  
**7 February 2024**

**REPORT BY:** Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer

**SUBJECT:** Standards Issues

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**REPORT FOR:** Decision, Information and Discussion

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**A. General Standards Issues for County Councillors and Co-opted Members**

No update required.

**B. Referral of County Councillors to the Ombudsman Wales**

The abbreviations used in the headings are as follows:

MO – Monitoring Officer

OW – Ombudsman Wales

Stds – Standards Committee

APW - Adjudication Panel for Wales

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Date OW notified MO of complaint</b>	<b>Date OW advised investigating or not investigating</b>	<b>Date OW's decision</b>	<b>Date considered by Stds</b>	<b>Date considered by APW</b>
03/CC/22		17/04/23 investigating			
05/CC/22		28/06/22 investigating	20/11/23 referred to Stds	07/02/24	

**C. Dispensations Applications - County Councillors**

No applications for dispensation have been received from County Councillors.

**D. Ombudsman Wales – Our Findings**

Details of cases are available in [Ombudsman Wales - Our Findings](#)

It should be noted that “Our Findings” covers all matters investigated by the Ombudsman and not just Code of Conduct matters. “Our Findings” is updated on a monthly basis.

‘Our Findings’ contains a search facility, which includes “Subject”. Under the “Subject” heading the following categories of the Code are listed:

- Integrity
- Promotion of equality and respect

- Disclosure and registration of interest
- Duty to uphold the law
- Selflessness and Stewardship

At a recent meeting of all Welsh Monitoring Officers, the Ombudsman’s office was asked to consider re-instating the “ Casebook”, which was considered to be more helpful. The Ombudsman has declined to reinstate the casebook but is committed to improve the searchability of its website.

**E. Adjudication Panel for Wales**

Details of cases considered by the APW are available via the following link: [Decisions | The Adjudication Panel for Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

**F. National Forum for Standards Committees**

The Forum met on 29 January 2024 [Appendix 1]. The Chair will provide a verbal report and his notes are attached at Appendix 2.

**G. Whistleblowing**

The committee has asked for details of the whistleblowing cases that the Council has received. The following table sets out the number of whistleblowing cases since 2019/20

<u>Year</u>	<u>No of Whistleblowing Complaint received</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
2019/20	2 ( 1 School & 1 Adult Social Care Commissioning)	1 not upheld 1 not investigated due to insufficient evidence
2020/21	0	N/A
2021/22	2 (1 Housing & 1 Adult services )	2 not upheld
2022/23	2 ( 2 different Schools)	2 Upheld
2023/24	3 ( 3 different Schools)	1 not upheld 1 independently investigated and report received 10.1.24 and being considered by Director 1 being investigated as disciplinary matter

HR are currently developing a toolkit to accompany the whistleblowing policy. The toolkit would promote initiatives around raising awareness of the policies, encourage staff to speak up and report their concerns, in addition to supporting staff who raise concerns or protected disclosures.

Section 115 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 now requires the Council’s Governance and Audit committee to review and assess the authority’s ability to handle complaints effectively, including the handling of

Whistleblowing complaints , As such , in future the reporting of whistleblowing complaints will be made to the Governance and Audit Committee and not to this committee.

## H. Meeting Dates

To note dates of meetings in 2024 as follows, all starting at 2pm:

10 April – annual meeting with Group Leaders

12 June

30 October

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