

Report

Standards Committee

Part 1

Date: 15th April 2021

Item No: 8

Subject **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Consultation on revised Code of Conduct Guidance**

Purpose To consider the draft revised Guidance prepared by the Ombudsman in relation to the Members Code of Conduct.

Author Head of Law and Regulation

Ward General

Summary The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is consulting on proposed changes to the Guidance on the Members Code of Conduct, both in relation to City Councillors and Community Councils. The revised draft Guidance was circulated for comment in February 2021 with an extended closing date for consultation responses by 21st March. For the most part, the changes simply update the previous Guidance to provide further practical examples of breaches of the Code, based on previous cases investigated by the PSOW and determined by Standards Committees and Case Tribunals

Proposal To consider the draft revised Guidance prepared by the Ombudsman in relation to the Members Code of Conduct.

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate

Background

1. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is consulting on proposed changes to the Guidance on the Members Code of Conduct, both in relation to City Councillors and Community Councils.
2. The revised draft Guidance was circulated for comment in February 2021 with an extended closing date for consultation responses by 21st March. Copies of the draft Guidance are attached to this report.
3. Because of the deadline for consultation responses, copies of the draft guidance were circulated to all members of Standards Committee on 10th February 2021 and members were invited to send any written comments by e-mail. No specific comments were received at the time.
4. In addition, copies of the revised Guidance in relation to Community Councillors was circulated to all Clerks of local community councils in February 2021. Again, no specific comments were received at that time.
5. For the most part, the changes simply update the previous Guidance to provide further practical examples of breaches of the Code, based on previous cases investigated by the PSOW and determined by Standards Committees and Case Tribunals.
6. The current Members Code of Conduct dates back to 2008 and was last revised in 2016. Therefore, Welsh Government and the WLGA are reviewing the current code prior to the next local government elections in May 2022. In addition, the WLGA are producing on-line training modules for new Councillors in relation to Ethical Standards, which will be rolled-out as part of the induction programme in May 2022. Training on the Code will, again, be mandatory for all elected members.

Options Available

7. Standards Committee are asked to note the report and consider the draft revised Guidance prepared by the PSOW in relation to the Members Code of Conduct.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

8. There are no financial implications.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

9. Included in the Report.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

10. There are no policy or HR implications

Dated: 7th April 2021

