

**SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Standards Committee
for 2023/24**

MEETING: Council
DATE: 24th October 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

To present the 2023/24 annual report of the Council's Standards Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Annual Report of the Standards Committee at Appendix 1.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Standards Committee is required by Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("LGE 2021") to make an annual report to their authority.

3.2 Section 63 LGE 2021 prescribes the content of the annual report as set out below.

4. DISCHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS

4.1 The Standards Committee is composed of nine members: three County Councillors, one community member and five independent members.

4.2 The Committee met twice in 2023/24 - on Monday 12th June 2023 and on Monday 9th October 2023.

4.3 The functions of the Committee are defined in sections 54 and 56 of the Local Government Act 2000 ("LGA 2000"). The primary function is to

promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the authority, and by the members of community councils in Monmouthshire.

5. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (PSOW)

5.1 The Standards Committee received one report from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (“PSOW”) during the year 2023/24 following an investigation into allegations that a member of Llantilio Petholey Community Council had breached their authority’s member code of conduct.

5.2 The matter was referred to a hearing of a Standards Committee Panel on 28th August 2024 and the outcome was reported on the Council’s website in accordance with the Committee’s procedure.

5.3 The PSOW’s annual letter to the Council for the year 2023/24 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

6. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF PSOW REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Not applicable.

7. NOTICES GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES

7.1 No notices regarding member conduct were received from APW during the year.

7.2 No member of the County Council and no member of any community council in the area of Monmouthshire were respondents at APW tribunals.

8. TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

8.1 All members of the Council are required to undergo Code of Conduct training. Code of Conduct training was provided for all members at County Hall on 12th May 2022 in person. Further training has been made available for those members who were unable to attend this training, or who have been co-opted to the Council since this date.

8.2 All members and co-opted members have received training on the Code of Conduct, either in person or via the online format.

9. COMPLIANCE OF POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS WITH NEW CONDUCT DUTIES s 52A(1) LGA 2000

9.1 The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all three MCC political group leaders complied with the duties set out above in s 52A(1) of LGA 2000 during the year ending 31st March 2024.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AUTHORITY

10.1 Section 56B(5) of LGA 2000 states that:

An annual report by a standards committee of a relevant authority may include recommendations to the authority about any matter in respect of which the committee has functions.

10.2 The committee has no recommendations for the authority.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The standards committee strongly commends all members of the authority for continuing to maintain high standards of conduct throughout 2023/24.

12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - PSOW's annual letter to the Council for the year 2023/24

14. CONSULTEES

Standards Committee
Monitoring Officer – James Williams

15. AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS

Peter Easy, Chair, on behalf of the Standards Committee