

Report To: Standards Committee

Date of Meeting: 2nd December 2016

Lead Member / Officer: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Title: Self-Regulatory Protocol

1. What is the report about?

The report is about the Council's Self-Regulatory Protocol (the Protocol).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To respond to the Committee's request that the possibility of extending the Protocol to encompass complaints by council officers regarding the conduct of elected members.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee considers the content of this report and whether it wishes to recommend changes to the Protocol

4. Report details.

- 4.1 The Council has had in place since 2012 a local resolution procedure for disputes or complaints between elected members. A copy of the Protocol is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has been a keen advocate of local resolution procedures such as the Protocol and believes that they relieve pressure on the resources of his office by reducing the number of low level complaints that it has to deal with. Such procedures also provide a speedier resolution to a dispute or complaint than a formal Ombudsman investigation and thus prevent damaged relationships becoming irretrievably broken.
- 4.3 At a recent meeting, members of the Committee requested that work be done to ascertain whether it would be possible to refer concerns raised by officers about a councillor's conduct towards them for consideration under this process.
- 4.4 In addition to the Code of Conduct the Council also has a Protocol for Member/Officer Relations which is attached as Appendix 2. This document sets out what members and officers can expect from each other. This document does refer to local resolution of concerns and it is suggested that

the Self-Regulatory Protocol can be amended to incorporate the handling of such concerns.

4.5 Research conducted with other local authorities in Wales suggests a mixed picture in respect of the use of local resolution procedures for issues raised by officers. The majority of authorities have local resolution procedures that are restricted to member on member complaints. There are some authorities that allow officers to raise concerns under their local resolution process. However, even where the process allows officers to raise such complaints it is very rare for them to do so. The majority of issues raised by officers are dealt with informally outside of the formal process.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The report has no direct impact on the corporate priorities.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no costs directly associated with the report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Wellbeing Impact Assessment?

This report does not require a wellbeing impact assessment.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

This matter has not been reported or consulted upon elsewhere.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

There are no risks directly associated with this report

11. Power to make the Decision

There is no decision required.