

Report to	Democratic Services Committee
Date of meeting	12 March 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
Report author	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
Title	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Consultation - Draft Revised Guidance on the Code of Conduct for Members of County, Town, City and Community Councils.

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report is about a consultation being conducted by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, (the Ombudsman) about new draft guidance for elected members on the Code of Conduct.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To seek the views of the Committee in respect of the draft revised guidance in order that they be provided to the Ombudsman's office.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee considers and comments on the draft revised guidance contained in Appendices 1 and 2 in order that a consultation response can be formulated.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Ombudsman is currently consulting on draft revised guidance on the Code of Conduct for elected members. There are two documents to consider. The first attached as Appendix 1 and is guidance for members of County Councils. The second document attached as Appendix 2 is guidance for members of Town, City and Community Councils.

- 4.2. The Ombudsman's current Guidance on the Code of Conduct for Members was published in August 2016. The guidance was designed to assist members to understand their obligations under the Code of Conduct. This continues to be the stated purpose in the latest draft.
- 4.3. The guidance documents that currently exist have been useful to members as they provide a readable text which explains the obligations imposed by the Code and contain examples which are help to set the Code's provisions into context.
- 4.4. The draft revised guidance that is the subject of the consultation follows a similar format to the previous guidance. The document appears to have been amended to include slightly more explanatory text and this is supplemented by a greater number of examples, many of which members may recognise from previous issues of the Code of Conduct Casebook. The draft revised guidance feels more up to date than the current guidance and is likely to be of assistance to existing councillors and to those who are newly elected in 2022. The documents are likely to be of assistance in the provision of training following the 2022 elections.
- 4.5. The consultation does not pose specific questions in respect of which answers are sought. Instead it would be helpful if the Committee could consider both documents from the perspective of members who would look to the documents for guidance. Committee members may wish to consider whether the documents are pitched at the right level of complexity, whether there are any aspects of the guidance that could be improved upon, and whether there is anything missing from the guidance that members may find useful.
- 4.6. The consultation closes on 21st March 2021.

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

- 5.1. The report does not have any direct impact upon the corporate priorities.

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

- 6.1 There are no costs directly associated with this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. An impact assessment is not required.

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

8.1. There have been no other consultations carried out in respect of this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 There are no direct financial consequences of this report.

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

10.1. There are no risks directly associated with this report.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. There is no decision required.