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| <b>Report to</b>             | Standards Committee                                  |
| <b>Date of meeting</b>       | 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2023                           |
| <b>Lead Member / Officer</b> | Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer                    |
| <b>Report author</b>         | Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer                    |
| <b>Title</b>                 | Public Services Ombudsman For Wales – ‘Our Findings’ |

## **1. What is the report about?**

1.1. The latest case summaries contained in the ‘Our Findings’ section of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (the Ombudsman) website

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1. To inform members of the latest case summaries contained within the ‘Our Findings’ section of the Ombudsman’s website which replaces the previous Code of Conduct Casebook.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the Committee notes the content of this report.

## **4. Report details**

4.1. Members of the Committee will recall that the Ombudsman has previously published a ‘Code of Conduct Casebook’ (the Casebook) on a quarterly basis which set out a short summary of matters which had been investigated by the Ombudsman and the outcome that had resulted from that investigation.

4.2. The Casebook was regarded as a useful tool in giving elected members, the public, and standards committees an insight into the types of complaints that were being investigated and the results of those investigations.

4.3. The Ombudsman has now ceased to publish the Casebook and has instead created an 'Our Findings' section on her website which can be accessed via the following link: <http://ombudsman.wales/findings/>

4.4. The 'Our Findings' section contains a search facility whereby details of cases considered by the Ombudsman can be searched for by topic, by authority, by outcome, by date, and by case reference number. The section covers all matters investigated by the Ombudsman and not just Conduct matters.

4.5. This report covers the period from 1st November 2022 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The 'Our Findings' section of the Ombudsman's website contains a summary of those cases involving Code of Conduct complaint that have been investigated by the Ombudsman, broken down by subject matter as follows:

- Disclosure and registration of interests 2
- Promotion of equality and respect 2
- Objectivity and propriety 1

4.6. The outcomes can be categorised as follows:

- Investigation discontinued 0
- No evidence of breach 1
- No action necessary 1
- Referral to a Standards Committee 1
- Referral to Adjudication Panel for Wales 2

4.7. The relevant extracts from the Our Findings pages are attached for ease of reference as Appendix 1. None of the cases relate to a council in Denbighshire.

4.8. The matter that has been referred to a Standards Committee has yet to be fully reported. Similarly, one of the two cases referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) during this period has also not yet been fully reported.

4.9. The one case referred to the APW that has been fully reported related to a member of St. Harmon Community Council in Powys. The member concerned had failed to declare a prejudicial interest at two meetings that were considering an Audit Wales report. The member confirmed that she was aware that she had prejudicial

interests but did not declare them as she did not want to leave the meetings. She participated in the meetings and voted. She confirmed that she did not regret her actions. The APW found that the member had breached the Code of Conduct by failing to declare her interests and by participating in the meetings. Further they considered that she had brought her authority into disrepute by her actions and had improperly used or attempted to use her position improperly to avoid a disadvantage for another person. The APW disqualified the member from being or becoming a member of any relevant authority for a period of twelve months.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

5.1. This report has no direct impact on the corporate plan

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

6.1. There are no costs associated with this report.

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

7.1. An assessment is not required for this report.

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

8.1. There have been no consultations 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 associated with this report

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. There is no decision required.