

Report to	Standards Committee
Date of meeting	8 th December 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
Head of Service	Catrin Roberts, Head of Service, Corporate Support Services People.
Report author(s)	Elinor Cartwright, Trainee Solicitor
Title	Public Service 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 3rd August – 24th November 2023. The 'Our Findings' section of the Ombudsman's website contains a summary of those cases involving Code of Conduct complaints that have been investigated by the Ombudsman, broken down by subject matter as follows:

Duty to uphold the law	1
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4.6. The outcomes can be categorised as follows:

No Action Necessary	1
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4.7 The relevant extract from the Our Findings pages is attached for ease of reference as Appendix 1. The case doesn't relate to a council in Denbighshire.

4.8 In brief, the Ombudsman received a complaint that a Member of Conwy County Borough Council had breached its Code of Conduct by participating and voting in a virtual Council meeting whilst appearing to be driving, which would have the potential to bring the Council into disrepute. Given that there was only evidence of a single event, the Ombudsman found that this incident was not indicative of repeated behaviour, and despite the Member being in breach of the Code, found that it would not be in the public interest to take further action under s 69(4)(b) Local Government Act 2000.

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. No statement is required.

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. Local Government Act 2000

11.2. No decision is required.