

<b>Report to</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Head of Service
<b>Report author(s)</b>	Elinor Cartwright, Trainee Solicitor
<b>Title</b>	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 and the latest decisions made by the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

## **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 and the latest decisions made by the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

## **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 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024. 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.

4.6. There were no complaints published within the 'Our Findings' section of the Ombudsman's website during the above time period.

4.7 This report also covers the period in which decisions have been made by the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) which can be accessed via the following link: <https://adjudicationpanel.gov.wales/decisions> The APW deals with reference by the Ombudsman and appeals against Standards Committee decisions. The 'Decisions' section of the APW's website contains a summary of those decisions since April 2024.

4.8 Since 1 April 2024 there have been two decisions made the APW in relation to references from the Ombudsman, there were no appeals against Standards Committee decisions. The outcomes can be categorised as follows:

Breach of paragraphs 4(b), 4(c), 5(a), 6(1)(a) and 7(a) – 4 month suspension

Breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) - Disqualified for 12 months

4.9 The relevant extracts from the Decisions page is attached for ease of reference as Appendix 1. None of the cases relate to a councillor in Denbighshire.

## **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.