

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**21 OCTOBER 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Monday, 21 October 2024

**PRESENT:** Julia Hughes (Chair)  
Councillor Ian Hodge

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**  
David Wynn Davies, Councillor Ros Griffiths, Mark Morgan, and Gill Murgatroyd

**ALSO PRESENT:**  
Councillor Andrew Parkhurst (as an observer).  
Councillor Carol Ellis (representing Councillor Charles Cordery)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Teresa Carberry and Anthony Wren. Jacqueline Guest (Co-opted Member)

**CONTRIBUTORS:**  
Clare Hardy (Independent Legal Advisor, Geldards LLP), Ywain Hughes (Legal Advisor, Public Services Ombudsman Wales), and Louise Morland (Representative, Public Services Ombudsman Wales)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  
Legal Services Manager, Democratic Services Manager, and Democratic Services Officer

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**  
There were no declarations of interest.

**34. HEARING INTO AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS** ([link to the recording](#)) ([link to the report](#))

In her opening statement the Chair welcomed those present to the meeting which was to resume the hearing started on 30 September 2024 into an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. She advised that the Standards Committee was required to reach a decision as to whether there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct and if so what action, if any, should be taken. The Standards Committee also needed to decide if any recommendations should be made to Flintshire County Council or Buckley Town Council.

The Chair explained the stage the hearing had reached so far and how the reconvened hearing would be conducted.

The Legal Advisor would present representations from the Public Services Ombudsman Wales. Councillor Carol Ellis would present representations on behalf of Councillor Charles Cordery.

**35. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting as the following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 18c of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

At this point all present who were not members of the Standards Committee or officers advising or supporting the Committee withdrew from the meeting.

**36. DECISION**

The Committee considered the disputed facts following the report issued by the Public Services Ombudsman Wales into an investigation of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Chair advised that having considered the evidence presented, the representations made on behalf of Councillor Cordery, and the advice given by the Ombudsman as to whether the findings of fact amounted to a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members, the Committee had reached the following conclusions:

- That Councillor Cordery had breached paragraph 4 (b) of the Code of Conduct: you must show respect and consideration for others;
- That Councillor Cordery had breached paragraph 8.03 of the Code of Conduct: you must when participating in meetings or reaching decisions regarding the business of your Authority do so on the basis of the merits of the circumstances involved; and in the public interest having regard to any relevant advice provided by the Authority's officers in particular by the Authority's monitoring officer.

The Chair advised that having found that Councillor Cordery had breached paragraphs 4 (b) and 8.03 of the Code of Conduct the Standards Committee had considered the mitigating and aggravating factors relating to Councillor Cordery's conduct when deciding whether a sanction should be imposed on him. The Committee had also had regard to the points made in the guidance from the Adjudication Panel for Wales that breaches involving the blatant disregard of the specific authoritative advice given, particularly by the relevant Authority's Monitoring Officer, as to the course of conduct to be taken, or the Code of Conduct, are likely to be regarded as very serious breaches.

The Standards Committee decided that the following sanction should be imposed on Councillor Cordery:

- That Councillor Cordery be suspended from being a member of Buckley Town Council for a period of 6 months.

The Standards Committee also decided to make the following recommendations:

- (a) That all Town and Community Councils within Flintshire should ensure that Councillors undertake training on the Code of Conduct within the first 3 months of a Councillor being elected or appointed;
- (b) That Town or Community Councils within Flintshire which had not signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge should consider doing so and should discuss implementation within their Council's activities;
- (c) That all Town and Community Councils within Flintshire should ensure that the induction of new Councillors ensured that Councillors understand everything in their Council's Standing Orders; and
- (d) That Buckley Town Council offers refresher training on the Code of Conduct to all its members

The Chair advised that Officers of Flintshire County Council would arrange that notification be given to the relevant persons of the Committee's decision and recommendations.

The full written decision will be published on Flintshire County Council's website.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Cordery be suspended from being a member of Buckley Town Council for a period of 6 months.

**37. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were three members of the public and no members of press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 9.15 am and ended at 5.00 pm)

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Chair