

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 1st November 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual Letter
<b>Report Author</b>	Deputy Monitoring Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The PSOW writes an annual letter to all County and County Borough Councils in Wales to set out the number of complaints received, both in respect of service complaints and complaints relating to breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct ("the Code"), for County, County Borough and Town and Community Councils. The letter must be presented to the Council's Cabinet to assist in their scrutiny of the Council's performance and actions related to that are to be reported back to the PSOW by the 15 November 2021.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Having had regard to the PSOW's annual letter and having noted that the complaints submitted during 2020/21 either led to findings of no evidence of a breach of the Code, or were discontinued or withdrawn, the Committee concludes that no action is needed.
---	---

### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
1.01	The letter is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The Standards Committee is only concerned with the ethical complaints element of the letter with the service complaints being in the remit of the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the Council.
1.02	The points to note in respect of the ethical complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code by County, County Borough and Town and

	Community Councillors are contained at Sections E (in respect of County and County Borough Councillors) and F (in respect of Town and Community Councillors) at page 8 of the letter. The letter also explains that complaints related to breaches of the Code across Wales that were referred to the Standards Committee or the APW are up to 3.4% from 2% in the previous year.
1.03	In respect of Code complaints that were closed during the year relating to Flintshire County Councillors, there was 1 in total for which a finding of no evidence of a breach was made. This compares to 2 in 2019/20 and 0 in 2018/19. These fluctuations are clearly minor.
1.04	In respect of Code complaints that were closed during the year relating to Town and Community Councillors in Flintshire, there were 11 in total, 9 of which led to findings of no evidence of breach, 1 was discontinued and 1 was withdrawn. This compares to 14 in 2019/20 and 18 in 2018/19. Again the numbers are broadly stable.
1.05	The Annual letter also explains that the PSOW has introduced a new publication called Our Findings. This publication replaces the quarterly case books for both cases relating to services and Code of Conduct cases and will be updated regularly. The last Code of Conduct case book covered the whole year for 2020. At the time of writing this report there are currently no additional cases contained in the Our Findings publication.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The letter is reported to the Council's Cabinet.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	N/A

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - The Annual Letter from the PSOW for the year 2020/21

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Matthew Georgiou, Deputy Monitoring Officer <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702330

	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:matthew.georgiou@flintshire.gov.uk">matthew.georgiou@flintshire.gov.uk</a>
--	---

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>PSOW</b> - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is independent of other bodies and has legal powers to investigate complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales and to investigate complaints that Members of local government bodies have broken their authority's Code of Conduct.