

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Ethics and Standards Committee

Date of meeting: 19 July 2024

Title: Monitoring Officer Code of Conduct Update- Quarter 4 2023-2024

Purpose of the report: Information

Background

Committee will recall that the Monitoring Officer reported:

Q1& 2 23/24 on 15/11/23

Q3 & Q4 up to 15/1/24. ESC 6/3/24: [Ceredigion County Council Agenda for Ethics and Standards Committee on Wednesday, 6th March, 2024, 10.00 am](#)

Committee:

- requested to be informed in future reports of any trends that had increased/decreased
- noted the increase in recent years of trends relating to social media and online abuse.

Current position

The Monitoring Officer Update-Q 4 period 1/1/24-31/3/24:

on Code of Conduct activity and recent trends and statistics is shown below.

County Council

Trends

- Decrease-lack of respect and consideration to officers
- Increase-lack of respect and consideration to other Councillors in public in public meetings eg offensive/inflammatory comments, falling short of breach of Code due to enhanced protection afforded by member's freedom of expression by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Increase use of inappropriate language in public meetings.
- Decrease: lack of respect and consideration to officers in public meetings
- Increase in inappropriate language in communication with public- at public events and leaflets

Statistics:

- APW interim suspension x1:6m-expired 9/1/24.
 - Councillor under PSOW investigation resigned x1
 - PSOW report x1
 - PSOW referral to APW
 - Councillors subject to enforcement investigation:x1
 - PSOW consideration of referral on pause x1
 - MO Code meetings with Councillors x 3
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- Self-referral to MO:0
 - Self-referral to PSOW:0
 - Referral by officers to PSOW x1
 - Councillor apology in public meetings x2
 - PSOW Decision Notices x 1
 - Transfer from neighbouring authorities to Ethics and Standards Committee for initial determination hearing:x2

Conclusion:

Consideration to be given to provision of additional Code training for Councillors and on social media and communications-arranged for 20/5/24

Town & Community Councils

Trends

- Increase in complaints relating to behaviour- lack of respect and consideration
- Increase- lack of respect and consideration towards members of public in public meetings eg offensive/inflammatory comments, falling short of breach of Code due to enhanced protection afforded by member's freedom of expression by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Increase - lack of respect and consideration towards members of public in public places
- Increase in bullying/harassment

Statistics:

- PSOW referral to Ethics and Standards Committee for initial determination hearing:x1
- PSOW Decision Notices x7
- Referral to APW x1
- Advice given to clerks: 3
- (Former) Councillor received Police caution x1

Conclusion:

Consideration to be given to need for Councillors to undertake Code of Conduct and /or refresher training

RECOMMENDATION (S): To note the contents of the report

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To inform Committee of Code of Conduct activity and recent trends

Contact Name: Elin Prysor

Designation: Monitoring Officer

Date of Report: 7/6/24