

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

REFERENCE FROM STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 17TH JULY, 2025

“203 DRAFT STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (MO / HLDS) –

Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Standards Committee, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, must make an Annual Report to the Authority in respect of that year.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was the draft Standards Committee Annual Report for consideration and / or approval and the Chair noted the requirement to amend the draft, following assessment of the statutory duties placed on Group Leaders as considered earlier on the same agenda.

Councillor Summers highlighted a typographical error within the annual report draft, at Page 11, that the Monitoring Officer confirmed would be corrected.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the draft Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and forwarded to Full Council subject to the following amendments:

a) The Committee’s assessment of the statutory duties placed on Group Leaders, and

b) Appendix 1 – Page 11 - (ix) Complaints / PSOW Investigation reports – Paragraph 5 – “suspended for **two** months.”

(2) T H A T delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Chair of the Standards Committee to include any additional comments made at the meeting in order to finalise the Annual Report before submission to Full Council.

(3) T H A T a copy of the finalised report, following presentation to Full Council, be forwarded to each Vale of Glamorgan Town and Community Council Clerk and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) In compliance with the requirements of Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

- (2) In order to insert additional comments into the Annual Report as discussed at the meeting.
- (3) For information.”

Attached as Appendix – Report to Standards Committee : 17th July, 2025 and Amended Annual Report.

Meeting of:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Draft Standards Committee Annual Report
Purpose of Report:	To present a draft Annual Report for consideration by the Standards Committee.
Report Owner:	V. Davidson - Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
Responsible Officer:	A. Rudman - Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	No consultation is required.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for the Standards Committee.
Executive Summary: - Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Standards Committee, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, must make an Annual Report to the Authority in respect of that year. - Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is the draft Standards Committee Annual Report for consideration and / or approval.	

Recommendations

1. T H A T the draft Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and forwarded to Full Council.
2. T H A T delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Chair of the Standards Committee to include any additional comments made at the meeting in order to finalise the Annual Report before submission to Full Council.
3. T H A T a copy of the finalised report, following presentation to Full Council, be forwarded to each Vale of Glamorgan Town and Community Council Clerk and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. In compliance with the requirements of Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
2. In order to insert additional comments into the Annual Report as discussed at the meeting.
3. For Information.

1. Background

- 1.1 Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Standards Committee has a duty, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, to make an Annual Report to its Local Authority in respect of that year.
- 1.2 Other requirements under the Act are as below:

The Annual Report must describe how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

(3) In particular, the report must include a summary of—

- (a) what has been done to discharge the general and specific functions conferred on the committee by section 54 or 56;
- (b) reports and recommendations made or referred to the committee under Chapter 3 of this Part;
- (c) action taken by the committee following its consideration of such reports and recommendations;
- (d) notices given to the committee under Chapter 4 of this Part.

(4) An annual report by a standards committee of a county council or county borough council in Wales must include the committee's assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the council have complied with their duties under section 52A(1) during the financial year.

(5) An annual report by a standards committee of a relevant authority may include recommendations to the authority about any matter in respect of which the committee has functions.

(6) A relevant authority must consider each annual report made by its standards committee before the end of 3 months beginning with the day on which the authority receives the report.

(7) The function of considering the report may be discharged only by the relevant authority (and accordingly is not a function to which section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 applies).

(8) In this section “financial year” means a period of 12 months ending with 31st March.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The Committee is requested to consider and approve the draft Annual Report attached at Appendix 1. The report refers to the work of the Standards Committee during the 2024/25 financial year and various actions taken following consideration of reports presented to the Committee during the year.
- 2.2** Following the approval of the draft Annual Report, the Report will be referred to the Vale of Glamorgan Full Council as required by the legislation.
- 2.3** Following presentation to Full Council, the report will be forwarded to each Vale of Glamorgan Town and Community Council Clerk and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives. It is intended that the Draft Report aims to promote that role.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Employment

5.2 None as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 The Standards Committee have a duty to present an Annual Report to the Local Authority as required under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

6. Background Papers

[Minutes of Standards Committee meetings](#) – available on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website.

Report – Standards Committee 10th June 2024: [Draft Standards Committee Annual Report](#).

Appendix 1 - Draft Standards Committee Annual Report.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

Foreword by the Chair of the Standards Committee

This is the third annual report of the Standards Committee's Annual Reports as required under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("the Act").

Section 63 of the Act provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year the Standards Committee of a relevant Authority must make an Annual Report to the Authority in respect of that year. The relevant Authority must consider each Annual Report before the end of three months beginning with the day on which the Authority received the Report.

The Annual Report must describe how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year. "The Act" also states that the Annual report must also include the Committee's assessment of the extent to which Leaders of Political Groups on the Vale Council have complied with their duties under Section 52(a)(i) during the financial year and may include recommendations to the Authority about any matter in respect of which the Committee has functions.

This Annual Report, which therefore covers the period from April 2024 to March 2025 provides information to the Vale of Glamorgan Council about the work carried out by the Committee during these past 12 months and identifies particular issues that have arisen.

The Standards Committee is committed to promoting high standards of ethical conduct among Elected Members, Co-opted Members and Officers in order to maintain public confidence in local government. The Standards Committee also has a responsibility for Code of Conduct matters for Town and Community Councils within the Vale of Glamorgan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of the Standards Committee, Elected Members and Officers of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, as well as Elected Members and Clerks of Town and Community Councils within the Vale of Glamorgan for their advice and support throughout the last 12 months.

Finally, I hope that this report proves an interesting read.

Richard Hendicott

Chair of Standards Committee 2024/25 (and returning for 2025/26).

1. INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs provide detail of the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Standards Committee, its work in the last 12 months, and future working arrangements and methods:

1.1 **Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee** (as contained within Section 8 of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution).

- (1) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives.
- (2) To assist Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (3) To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (4) To monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (5) To advise, train or arrange to train Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (6) To grant dispensations to Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (7) To deal with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that officer by the Public Services Ombudsman.
- (8) To exercise (1) to (7) above in relation to the community councils wholly or mainly in its area and the Members of those community councils.
- (9) To overview complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.
- (10) To make an Annual Report to Full Council describing how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.
- (11) To monitor compliance by political leaders of the above duties and provide advice, training or arrange to train Leaders of political groups.

1.2 **Structure and Membership of the Standards Committee**

The composition and membership of the Standards Committee is prescribed by the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 (As Amended). The

Standards Committee comprises of five independent Members (persons who have no connection with the Local Authority).

Independent Members:

1. R. Alexander
2. G. Olphert (appointed in June 2024)
3. R. Hendicott
4. L. Tinsley (resigned in May 2025 with recruitment replacement process to commence imminently. Standards Appointment Panel to be convened following receipt of applications)
5. G. Watkins

Town and Community Council (TCC) Representative

Councillor P. Summers

Vale of Glamorgan Council Members

R.M. Birch
J.E. Charles
C.P. Franks.

Standards Committee Attendance Figures

Municipal year 2024/25									Total
	10/06	29/07	29/07	26/09	21/11	22/11	30/01	27/03	/8
Alexander	Y	A	A	A	A	A	Y	Y	3/8
Olphert	N/A*	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	Y	4/7
Hendicott	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8/8
Tinsley	Y	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	1/8
Watkins	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	7/8
Summers	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	7/8
Birch	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y	6/8
Charles	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	7/8
Franks	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	7/8

Y	In attendance
A	Apologies provided
N/A*	Not yet appointed to Committee

Independent members and the TCC representative of the Standards Committee serve a term of office of between 4-6 years, although they are eligible to serve two consecutive terms of office with the second term not exceeding four years. Elected Members on the Committee are appointed annually by the Council at the Council's Annual Meeting, which usually takes place in May each year and are appointed until the next Local Government Elections unless they cease to be a Member of the Council. They too can be re-appointed for one further consecutive term.

2. HOW MANY TIMES HAS THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MET IN 2024/25

The Standards Committee under legislation is required to meet at least once annually in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. The Committee meets on a scheduled quarterly basis or as business is required, for example where additional special meetings are arranged to deal with specific matters, including hearings.

During the Municipal year 2024/25 the Standards Committee met on eight occasions:

10th June 2024,
29th July 2024,
29th July 2024 (Hearing),
26th September 2024,
21st November 2024,
22nd November 2024 (Hearing),
30th January 2025, and
27th March 2025.

The Committee's work programme for the Municipal year 2024/25 can be found [here](#) and its work programme for 2025/26, which was approved by the Committee on 30th January 2025 can be found as [Appendix A](#) to this report.

[Agendas](#) are published within five days (including weekends) of the date of the meeting and all meetings of the Committee are livestreamed as well as recorded for future viewing, subject to confidentiality, and available on the Council's Website [here](#).

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Code of Conduct can be found at Section 19 of the [Constitution](#).

Appendix 1 to Section 19 provides details of the principles of public life which are: Selflessness, Honesty, Integrity and Propriety, Duty to Uphold the law, Stewardship, Objectivity in Decision-Making, Equality and Respect, Openness, Accountability and Leadership.

Appendix 2 of Section 19 details the protocol of standards of conduct expected by Members within the Vale of Glamorgan Council in dealing with each other. This protocol is to be read in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct and the Member/Officer Protocol.

Appendix 3 of Section 19 details the Local Dispute Resolution Procedure for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to deal with complaints which are made by a Member against a fellow Member which may not otherwise be investigated by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3. THE WORK OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE IN 2024–25

3.1 The work of the Standards Committee in 2024-25, as can be seen from the Committee's Work Programme as referred to above, is significant and includes reports such as :

- Applications for Dispensation.
- Reports of the Monitoring Officer meeting with Town and Community Councils' Clerks.
- Observation visits by Independent Members.
- Reports of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).
- Reports of the Adjudication Panel for Wales
- Independent Review of Investigations by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
- National Standards Committees Chairs Forum Wales.
- Matters referred under the Local Dispute Resolution Procedure.
- Complaints referred by the Ombudsman following an Investigation.
- Consideration of the Terms of Reference of a Review Panel.
- Feedback reports following the attendance of the Chair at the National Standards Committees Chairs Forum.
- Feedback reports from the Monitoring Officer following meetings of the All Wales Monitoring Officer Group.
- Internal Audit Reports.
- Standards Committee Annual Report; and
- Standards Committee Forward Work Programme
- Civility in Public Life – Programme of work

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Victoria Davidson, the Deputy Monitoring Officer / Operational Manager Legal Services Justine Cass and the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team provide advice and support at regular intervals in respect of the Standards Committee and Code of Conduct matters.

3.2 The following paragraphs detail further work of the Committee during the year:

(i) Applications for Dispensation

Dispensation applications from Elected Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council's within the Vale of Glamorgan are presented to the Committee for consideration under the Standards Committee's statutory powers to grant dispensations to Members with a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter. Once approved this allows Councillors to participate in a decision regarding that matter, in appropriate circumstances, as are set out in the statutory regulations. During the course of the year a number of dispensations were granted to allow Members to actively participate in decision-making and to ensure their voice and the voice of their constituents was not lost as a result of any prejudicial interest. In conjunction with the Chair of Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer has a delegated

authority to consider, refuse or approve an application should she choose to do so.

Applicants are also advised that they are able to attend the Standards Committee meeting to present their application should they wish to do so. Details of the applications that have been dealt with over the last six years can be viewed as part of the minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee which are available on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website [here](#).

Recommendation from last year's Annual Report –

In last year's Annual report, the Standards Committee resolved that a copy of the finalised report, following presentation to Full Council, be forwarded to each Vale of Glamorgan Town and Community Council Clerks and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

(ii) Observations by Independent Members of the Standards Committee

Having regard to its role and function as referred to in 1.1(1) above, the Standards Committee agreed that Independent Members of the Committee would observe meetings of the Vale of Glamorgan Council (since March 2018) and Town and Community Council (TCC) meetings (since March 2019) during each Municipal year with a view to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in line with the Members' Code of Conduct.

Feedback reports compiled by Independent Members of the Standards Committee are presented at Standards Committee meetings by the Independent Members, with any specific observations that require discussion or further action being discussed by the Monitoring Officer with the Chief Executive of the Vale of Glamorgan Council or the Clerk and / or Chair of the TCC.

Following a Committee decision in March 2022, the Committee, after receiving advice from the Monitoring Officer, agreed that as a number of Senior Council Officers and Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers attend Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings that they be requested to report to the Monitoring Officer any matters regarding Code of Conduct and Governance that may require attention and / or suggestions for improvement.

With regard to observations of TCC meetings, the Standards Committee also recently agreed that where no significant issues are reported following visits, that TCC observations take place on a biennial basis. However, it is accepted that during any year the Monitoring Officer can ask for a TCC to be visited if they consider there to be a need to do so.

The Monitoring Officer also provides TCC Clerks with an overview of observations undertaken, as well as any related points of good practice and areas of concern, at the Monitoring Officer and Clerks meetings which are held on a six monthly basis.

Chairs and Clerks of the TCCs are advised by Democratic Services of the dates of the meetings the Independent Member intends observing in order that arrangements for the agenda and the link/location to the virtual/in-person meeting can be forwarded to the Independent Member in time for the meeting. A schedule of visits is maintained within Democratic Services.

To assist with observation visits, a proforma was agreed by the Standards Committee which provides the Independent Member with a list of questions to consider when undertaking such visits.

On the 30th January 2025, the Standards Committee agreed a total of 6 observation visits be undertaken by each Independent Member of the Standards Committee, over a two year period during the Municipal Years 2025/26 and 2026/27, and that the timetable of observations be assessed on an annual basis to align with the outcomes of the Boundary Commission for Wales Community Review currently under consideration by Welsh Government ministers.

At the same January 2025 meeting, the consensus of the Committee was that TCC visits were a worthwhile exercise and that the allocation of 6 visits per Independent Member (5 x TCC and 1 x VoG) was not considered excessive over a two-year period. Conducting observations provided the Committee with the opportunity to assess if standards were being maintained since previous observations had taken place, as well as offer invaluable support and a critical friend approach for TCCs.

The following suggestions of the Committee were also agreed:

- That, in terms of allocations, Independent Members be rotated across TCC visits to avoid any duplicated observations by the same Independent Member.
- An attempt would be made to conduct visits for half of the 26 TCCs within the 2025-26 Municipal year and the second half in the 2026-27 Municipal Year.
- TCCs to be given advance notice of the Independent Member Observation taking place; and
- Independent Members should remain mindful of the varying size and composition of TCCs when conducting observations.

(iii) Monitoring Officer Meetings with Clerks

As mentioned above the Monitoring Officer holds meetings with Clerks of TCCs, usually on a six monthly basis, to provide opportunities for discussion of matters of mutual concern, to have regard to the principles of standards in public life and to provide networking

opportunities. The next meeting is being scheduled for September 2025.

Reports of the Clerks meetings with the Monitoring Officer are provided to the Standards Committee following the meetings taking place.

Feedback received to date following the meetings is that the meetings are both useful and informative and a frank exchange of views shared, which Clerks are grateful to the Monitoring Officer for hosting.

Key areas discussed included: the dispensations process, Clerks were reminded that applications for dispensation from Members with interests in items at TCC meetings should be submitted in a timely manner. Decisions of the Standards Committee are published within seven working days. The Independent Remuneration Panel Report Consultation, Clerks were advised to respond by 29 November to the consultation on allowances and payments for TCC Members. The Vale Council submitted a draft response with caveats. Standards Committee Observations: From April 2025, Independent Members of the Standards Committee will observe TCC meetings to assess conduct and governance. Reports will inform future Standards Committee discussions. PSOW Investigations Review, a national review commenced in May 2024, highlighting improvements in the PSOW's handling of politically sensitive complaints. Key recommendations included improving transparency, documentation, and notification processes. Highlights from both the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the Adjudication Panel for Wales were shared, showing an increase in complaints and a high rate of upheld cases. The recent review has been concluded and is awaiting Welsh Government legal orders for implementation. The meetings are attended by a representative from One Voice Wales.

(iv) Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Reports and Accounts

These reports provide the Committee with details relating to the functions of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (the Ombudsman) and the Adjudication Panel for Wales throughout the year and also details of financial management of the Ombudsman's office.

(v) Received and Considered Case Decisions of the Adjudication Panel for Wales and the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

Reports from the Adjudication Panel for Wales are regularly reported to the Standards Committee as and when available.

(vi) All Wales Standards Committee Forum

The All Wales Standards Forum is a body for the sharing of good practice and the co-ordination of activity; however, it is not a formal

decision-making body. The agendas for the Forum meetings are prepared by the Monitoring Officers Group (MOG) with members of the Forum being able to suggest items for future business. Meetings of the Forum are to be held once or twice per year. The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Standards Committee were keen to be part of the all-Wales Forum and reports on the work and discussions of the Forum are reported to the Standards Committee by the Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Standards Committee for information and consideration as appropriate.

(vii) Local Dispute Resolution Procedure

The Standards Committee had previously noted that the Local Resolution Protocol adopted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council on 25th June 2014 and amended on 26th September 2018 continues to provide a helpful process for resolving relatively low level behavioural complaints made by Vale of Glamorgan Council Members about other Members in a timely and proportionate way. No Matters have been dealt with under the Council's Local Dispute Resolution Procedure during the 2024/25 year.

The Standards Committee also continue to encourage TCCs to adopt their own Local Dispute Resolution Protocol using the model developed by One Voice Wales in consultation with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

At the Full Council meeting of the Vale of Glamorgan on 2nd December 2025 Council approved a Motion that a review of Appendix 2, Protocol Standards of Conduct expected by Members under Section 19 of the Council's Constitution and the Council's Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (LDRP) for dealing with low level allegations of breaches of the Members Code of Conduct and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Protocol – Standard of conduct expected by Members under Appendix 3 to Section 19 of the Constitution be undertaken.

As such, the Standards Committee were presented with a report on the 27th March 2025 and asked for any interested members of the Committee to nominate themselves for inclusion within a small working group to review Standards Procedures and that relevant terms of reference for the Working Group would be drawn up for future consideration, in order that a working group of Standards Committee Members could be established to undertake a review of the Council Procedures. The Committee subsequently resolved:

(1) T H A T the membership of the Standards Procedures Working Group be confirmed as follows:
Richard Hendicott Independent Member
Gerwyn Watkins Independent Member
Councillor Phil Summers Independent Member (TCC Rep)

Councillor Rhiannon Birch Vale of Glamorgan Elected Member

(2) T H A T a terms of reference be drawn up for the Standards Procedures Working Group for future consideration.

(viii) Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) and Political Group Leaders’ Duty

The above Act has been a major piece of legislation for Local Authorities in Wales with some extra duties being placed on the Standards Committee within Section 63 of “The Act “ as mentioned in my foreword at the beginning of this report. Section 62 of the “the Act” has also placed a further duty on Political Group Leaders in relation to standards of conduct. The Act states that the Leader of a Political Group must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members of the Group and must co-operate with the Council’s Standards Committee (and any sub-committee of the Committee) in the exercise of the Standards Committee functions. The Section also provides that the Standards Committee must also monitor compliance of Leaders of Political Groups with their duties under Section 52(a)(i) of the 2000 Act and advise, train, or arrange to train Leaders of Political Groups about matters relating to those duties.

Having regard to the requirements of the ‘21 Act, the Standards Committee meet with Group Leaders following the Council’s annual meeting and, where considered appropriate, meetings with Group Leaders and the Chair of the Standards Committee may also take place. An example Proforma to assist Group Leaders in exercising their duty, was also agreed which once completed is forwarded to the Monitoring Officer and thereafter reported to the Standards Committee and referred to in the Annual Report.

The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of Standards Committee, will also continue to brief Independent Members similarly to Political Group Leaders on matters to ensure that standards of conduct are achieved to a high standard.

The proforma that has been developed to assist Group Leaders under the Section 62 duty may also include any further information provided by the Monitoring Officer such as the number of concerns or complaints raised during the year, together with details of the Group Leaders’ responses.

Following consideration of the pro-formas submitted by Group Leaders, as well as discussions held with the same, the Standards Committee resolved that this Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2024-25 be amended to reflect the Committee’s satisfaction that the statutory duties placed on Group Leaders have been met.

(ix) Complaints / PSOW Investigation reports

The Standards Committee also considers specific complaints that are formally referred to the Standards Committee by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) as and when received. However, at each Standards Committee meeting, under the Part II item of the agenda, the Monitoring Officer provides an overview to the Standards Committee of the up to date position regarding, if any, complaints / concerns received from the Public Services Ombudsman, not yet in the public domain, that are made against Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and / or Town and Community Councils alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer provides an overview of the complaints which may or may not end up for consideration by the Standards Committee it being noted that the PSOW may decide that is it not appropriate for an investigation to take place.

During 2023/2024 two reports following an investigation by the PSOW were received, one in relation to a Vale of Glamorgan Councillor the other in relation to a TCC Councillor, with hearings subsequently taking place in the 2024/25 year on the 29th of July and the 22nd of November 2024, respectively. The relevant reports and minutes are available on the Council's website.

29th July Outcome: Councillor Driscoll was suspended for three months as a Principal Council member.

22nd November Outcome: Councillor Perry was suspended for two months as a member of the St Nicholas & Bonvilston Community Council. Councillor Perry appealed to the Adjudication Panel for Wales who overturned the decision of the Standards Committee.

4. OTHER ASPECTS

4.1 Elected Member Induction and Training

- (i) As mentioned in the Annual Report 2022/23 the Local Government elections in Wales took place in May 2022. A comprehensive training programme had been considered by the Standards Committee prior to the elections in May 2022. The comprehensive induction programme was for Elected Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council however, the Monitoring Officer at that time had also commissioned Code of Conduct / Ethical Standards training from One Voice Wales for all TCCs. The training included remote and in person attendance sessions with recordings of the sessions also being made available for later use. All Co-opted Members with voting rights (which includes Members of the Standards Committee) also took part in this induction and training programme.

- (ii) Training was also provided by the Monitoring Officer to the Town and Community Council representative on the Standards Committee following their appointment to the Committee.
- (iii) Training was also provided by the Monitoring Officer to the most recent Independent Member on the Standards Committee, Mr Gregory Olphert, following their appointment to the Committee in June 2024.
- (iv) Through the auspices of the Standards Committee the Monitoring Officer also offers Group Leaders opportunities to identify any additional training or refresher training, as required, with a session on personal and prejudicial interests following a request from a Group Leader having been delivered for one political group during the year.
- (v) Refresher training is scheduled to be delivered to all Principal Council Members in the Autumn of 2025.

4.2 Future Priorities

As mentioned earlier within this report, the Standards Committee have developed and agreed their Forward Work Programme for 2025/26 which can be found at Appendix A to this report, and which also details the dates of future meetings. Dates of future meetings of the Committee can also be found on the Council's website [here](#).

The Standards Committee will continue to –

- Consider applications for dispensations.
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct – including working with Group Leaders, Independent Elected Members, Town, and Community Council Elected Members and Clerks.
- Share good practice and seek continuous improvement at Vale of Glamorgan and Town and Community Council meetings, as appropriate.
- Share good practice and maintain discussions with the All Wales Standards Forum.
- Play a key role in the development of future induction programmes for Elected and Co-opted Members, and
- Respond where appropriate to any consultation / and or reports of the PSOW as required.