

SUMMARY OF PSOW INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES CONCERNING ALLEGED MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT BREACHES

DUTY TO UPHOLD THE LAW

**Llansantffraed Community Council
Report Date – 12/01/2024**

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Llansantffraed Community Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct following a criminal conviction for driving whilst over the legal limit for alcohol.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Deputy Monitoring Officer of Ceredigion County Council for consideration by the local Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.

**Neath Port Talbot Council
Report Date – 16/01/2024**

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Neath Port Talbot Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct. It was alleged that the Member was arrested by the Police on suspicion of driving his car whilst being under the influence of alcohol.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Deputy Monitoring Officer of the Council for consideration by the local Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.

**Aberystwyth Town Council
Report Date- 13/3/2024**

Outcome

Referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales

We received complaints from Ceredigion County Council (“the Council”) that a councillor (“the Former Member”) had breached the Council’s Code of Conduct. The Former Member was also a councillor at Aberystwyth Town Council.

The Council was concerned that the Former Member had been involved in a number of separate incidents which involved inappropriate harassing and stalking behaviour towards women. Some of the incidents involved sexual harassment.

Our finding, under section 69 of the Local Government Act 2000, was that our report on our investigation be referred to the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales, for adjudication by a tribunal.

This summary will be updated following the Adjudication Panel for Wales' decision.

New Quay Town Council
Report Date – 27/03/2024

Outcome

Referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Former Member (“the Former Member”) of New Quay Town Council (“the Council”) breached the Code of Conduct. It was alleged that the Former Member had been charged by the Police with malicious intent to blackmail or harass. Our finding, under section 69 of the Local Government Act 2000, was that our report on our investigation be referred to the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales, for adjudication by a tribunal.

The Tribunal found that the Former Member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. Its sanction was to disqualify the Former Member from being a member of any Relevant Authority, as set out in the Local Government Act 2000, for 12 months.

[The Case Tribunal's decision is available here.](#) This decision is subject to appeal.

PROMOTION OF EQUALITY & RESPECT

Powys County Council/Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Report date - 20/11/2023

Outcome – Referral to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Member (“the Member”) of Powys County Council (“the Council”) breached the Code of Conduct.

The report on this investigation has therefore been referred to the Monitoring Officer of Powys County Council, for consideration by the Council's Standards Committee and to the Monitoring Officer of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority, for consideration by the Authority's Standards Committee. This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee's decision.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Report Date – 07/12/2023

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Caerphilly County Borough Council and Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn Community Council (“the Councils”) had breached the Code of Conduct.

We received 4 complaints that the Councillor had breached the Councils' Codes of Conduct. The complainants were concerned about a photograph and caption that the Councillor had posted on Facebook. The photograph was of the Councillor standing on a beach holding a rifle. The accompanying message he posted said "Ogmore-by-Sea tonight for a quick swim and make sure there wasn't (sic) any English people trying to cross the channel".

We found that the Councillor posted the message on Facebook and deleted it 2 weeks or so later when the national media, politicians and members of the public were concerned about the appropriateness of the post. At this time the Councillor posted an apology if he had offended anyone, and he said his post was ill-judged.

We found that the Police had received allegations that the Councillor had posted a malicious communication and that the Councillor had agreed to the restorative justice process to resolve matters. The Councillor made a full admission to the crime of a racially aggravated Section 5 Public Order offence. He signed a Police statement where he explained he had not intended to cause offence but to have a friendly joke with his English friends. He accepted with hindsight that it may have been capable of upsetting others, he had voluntarily disclaimed ownership of the air rifle (which was not operative) to the Police, and he had issued an apology on Facebook.

We found that the Councillor had been suspended by his party, Plaid Cymru, pending their investigations and he had subsequently been reinstated.

Overall, we concluded that the Councillor's conduct was suggestive of a breach of paragraph:

- 6(1)(a) of the Councils' Codes of Conduct. This says that councillors must not conduct themselves in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office, or that of their authority, into disrepute.

The report on this investigation has therefore been referred to the Monitoring Officer of Caerphilly County Borough Council, for consideration by the Council's Standards Committee. The Council's Standards Committee found that the Member had failed to comply with paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee decided that the most appropriate sanction to be applied was a censure, with a recommendation for further training in respect of the Members' Code of Conduct, with a particular emphasis upon the use of social media in order to prevent breaches arising in the future.

Newport City Council

Report Date – 13/12/2024

Outcome

No evidence of breach

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member ("the Member") of Newport City Council ("the Council") breached the Code of Conduct ("the Code") when he approached the complainant on her driveway and accused her of having a camera in her house directed towards his house. It was alleged that the Member relied upon his position as a councillor to persuade the complainant to let him into her house to check if there was a camera present.

The Ombudsman's investigation considered whether the Member's conduct may have breached paragraphs 4(b), 4(c) and 6(1)(a) of the Code. Information was obtained from the Council. Witnesses, including the complainant, were interviewed. The Member was interviewed.

The Ombudsman's investigation found that the complainant and Member's version of events differed. The Member said that he had not referenced his role as a councillor. The Ombudsman found that there was no independent witness evidence, or any other type of evidence, available to account for what happened during the exchange and accordingly, there was not sufficient evidence to suggest that the Member had referenced his role as a councillor. As a result, given that there was not sufficient evidence that the Member was acting in his capacity as a councillor during the exchange, most of the provisions of the Code (including the requirement to show respect and consideration to others) were not engaged. The only relevant provision of the Code which applies at all times, including when the Member was acting in a private capacity, was the obligation not to act in a way which could reasonably be regarded as having brought disrepute upon the Council and/or the office of councillor. Whilst the complainant reported the incident to the Police, the Police did not speak with the Member about the interaction and took no action in relation to the matter. In view of this, the Ombudsman found that there was no evidence that the Member had brought his office as councillor or his Council into disrepute. Therefore, on the balance of the available evidence, the Ombudsman was not persuaded that there was evidence of a breach of the Code.

Accordingly, the Ombudsman found that under Section 69(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 2000 there was no evidence of any failure to comply with the Code.

Bridgend County Borough Council Report Date – 05/01/24

Outcome

No action necessary

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member ("the Member") of Bridgend County Borough Council ("the Council") had breached the Code of Conduct for members.

The Complainant was concerned that the Member had behaved in an aggressive and disrespectful way towards her during a Development Committee site visit in January 2023. The site visit was arranged so that members of the Development Committee could better understand the site in relation to an application it received, which concerned the route for construction traffic. It was alleged that the Member pointed his finger at the Complainant, encroached upon her personal space, and was aggressive in his manner and tone. It was also alleged he called the Complainant a "silly woman".

We gathered relevant information from the Monitoring Officer for Bridgend County Borough Council, and we interviewed a number of individuals who were present at the site visit including a local resident, a Councillor and member of Council staff in attendance.

We found the site visit was contentious in nature and tensions were running high, given its sensitivity from the start. On balance it appeared the Member could have handled matters better and his behaviour presented to others as being aggressive. There was insufficient evidence to suggest the member had used the word "woman" in a derogatory term. We found the Member's behaviour was suggestive of a breach of paragraph 4(b) of the Code which says that members must show respect and consideration of others when conducting council business.

Advice was issued to the Member to be mindful of his future behaviour, particularly when trying to manage contentious and sensitive situations, and to be mindful of his use of language, and how this could be perceived by others. Given this was an isolated incident, it was not proportionate or in the public interest to take any further action in relation to the matter.

Llantilio Pertholey Community Council

Report Date – 11/03/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Member (“the Member”) of Llantilio Pertholey Community Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code (“the Code of Conduct”). The Complainant alleged that he personally witnessed the Member threaten to punch a fellow Councillor over an argument about the use of a local car park during a full meeting of the Council.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Monitoring Officer of Monmouthshire County Council, for consideration by the Council’s Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.

Haverfordwest Town Council

Report Date - 23/03/2024

Outcome

No action necessary

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Former Member (“the Former Member”) of Haverfordwest Town Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct (“the Code”).

The Ombudsman’s investigation considered whether the Former Member’s conduct may have breached paragraphs 4(a), 4(b), 4(c) and 6(1)(a) of the Code.

Information was obtained from the Council. Witnesses, including the Complainant, were interviewed. The Former Member was interviewed.

In relation to Paragraph 4(a), it was alleged that the Former Member treated the female members of the Council differently. Specifically, it was alleged that the Former Member only requested expenses from female members of the Council, ignored female members of the Council during meetings and tried to prevent a female member from becoming the Mayor of the Council.

The Ombudsman’s investigation found that the Former Member requested expenses from individuals who held a role that included an allowance – in this instance, it was only female members of the Council who held a position which included an allowance. There was no evidence that the Former Member requested such information on the basis of gender. In addition, it was found that the Former Member had a process to ensure that he did not ignore any councillor wishing to speak in meetings. Evidence was provided to corroborate the Former Member’s explanation. The Ombudsman was therefore not persuaded that there was evidence to substantiate the complaint that the Former Member ignored female members of the Council. Finally, the investigation found that the issue in relation to the Mayoral election was contentious. The Former Member took appropriate action seeking advice from the appropriate body, One Voice Wales. The Ombudsman considered that there was no evidence that the Former Member’s actions were motivated by discrimination on the basis of gender.

Accordingly, the Ombudsman’s investigation found that the Member’s conduct was not suggestive of a breach of paragraph 4(a) of the Code.

In relation to Paragraph 6(1)(a), it was alleged that the Former Member brought his office and authority into disrepute as a result of a German press article which allegedly stated that he had behaved poorly during a trip to Haverfordwest's twin town, Oberkirch, in September 2022.

The Ombudsman's investigation found that there was no evidence to support the allegation. The article complained about was obtained and it did not reference the Former Member's alleged behaviour. Accordingly, the Ombudsman was not persuaded that there was evidence suggestive of a breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code.

In relation to Paragraph 4(b) and 4(c) of the Code, it was alleged that the Former Member acted in a disrespectful and bullying way towards the Complainant during 3 separate meetings. The Ombudsman's investigation found that in relation to 2 meetings complained about, the witness evidence was conflicting. The Ombudsman found, on the balance of the available evidence, that there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate that the Former Member had failed to treat the Complainant with respect and consideration or used bullying behaviour during 2 of the meetings complained about.

In relation to the final meeting complained about, the Ombudsman's investigation found that there was witness evidence that the Former Member had shouted and raised his voice. The Ombudsman concluded that in shouting, the Former Member had failed to treat 2 councillors with respect and consideration which was suggestive of a breach of paragraph 4(b). The Ombudsman concluded that the Former Member's actions did not constitute bullying within the meaning of the Code. Finally, she concluded that the Former Member's behaviour was not so extensive or serious so as to be suggestive of a breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code. In considering whether further action was required, the Ombudsman took into account the full background and contextual information, any relevant mitigation and the likelihood of any sanction, should the matter be referred to a Standards Committee.

The Ombudsman considered that there was evidence of a strained relationship between the Former Member and the Complainant. Witness evidence was obtained which also suggested that the Former Member had experienced poor treatment from other members of the Council, including the Complainant. In particular, press coverage of a Council meeting documented that the Complainant had made comments about the Former Member and described him as a "disgrace to the town". The Ombudsman considered that there was evidence of generally poor behaviour at meetings. The Ombudsman also acknowledged that the Former Member had tried to deal with the issues that had been raised. The Former Member resigned as a member of the Council and does not intend on returning.

As the Former Member is no longer a council member, if a breach of the Code of Conduct were found by the County Council's Standards Committee, any sanction would be limited to a censure only. In view of the above, the Ombudsman did not consider that it was in the public interest to take any further action.

Under Section 69(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000, the Ombudsman found that no action needed to be taken in respect of the matters investigated.

Tenby Town Council
Report Date – 26/03/2024

Outcome

No action necessary

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Member ("the Member") of Tenby Town Council ("the Council") had breached the Code of Conduct ("the Code") by attending the Complainant's home one evening to speak to her teenage son about an anti-social behaviour matter. It was

alleged that he used his position improperly to suggest that he would obtain an anti-social behaviour order against the Complainant's son and that he would not be able to work again in the town. It was also alleged that the Member failed to show respect and consideration for others because he raised his voice and was aggressive in his tone.

The Ombudsman's investigation considered whether the Member had breached paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code by bringing his office or authority into disrepute, or 7(a), by attempting to use his position improperly to confer an advantage for himself or create a disadvantage for another. It was also considered whether the Member attended the Complainant's home in his capacity as a Councillor in the community, and if so, whether any further breaches of the Code would apply.

Information was obtained from the Council. Witness evidence was obtained from the Complainant, her son and a third party who attended at the Complainant's home with the Member and who was present at the time of the incident alleged. Information was also obtained from the Member.

The Ombudsman found that the Member did not, from what all the witnesses have said, say that he was attending the Complainant's home in his capacity as a Councillor in the community. He was not attending on council business – this was a private matter which he was dealing with in his personal capacity. This being the case he was not bound to adhere to all provisions of the Code of Conduct for councillors.

The Member, however, would have been bound by the requirement not to act in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office, or his authority, into disrepute. He would also have been required to ensure that he did not attempt to use his position improperly to confer an advantage for himself or create a disadvantage for another.

The Ombudsman found that whilst the Complainant said the Member referred, at one stage, to having been a Councillor, and a former Mayor and teacher in the town, overall, it was clear from the evidence that the Member was attempting to encourage the Complainant's son to refrain from any such behaviour in the future. He explained that the consequences of criminal damage could be serious. It appears that part of the consequences of an anti-social behaviour order which the Member explained were difficulties getting jobs, and practical difficulties in working in hospitality if a curfew was in place. Given the circumstances described, the Ombudsman was not of the view that there was evidence suggestive of an attempt by the Member to use his position improperly to gain an advantage or create a disadvantage for the Complainant's son.

The Ombudsman found that on balance the Member was likely to have been annoyed. Serious damage had occurred to his front door and his family had been frightened. The Complainant's son said he sensed he was annoyed as he was quite loud with his comments. However, he did not specifically remember him making any gestures. While the Complainant's concern was understandable at having an 'annoyed' visitor attend her home late in the evening, the Ombudsman was not persuaded on balance that there was sufficient evidence to suggest the Member behaved inappropriately, so as to bring his office or his authority into disrepute.

The Ombudsman found that this was a private dispute which the Member sought to resolve in his private capacity. Overall, the Ombudsman was not persuaded by the evidence considered that it was suggestive that a breach of the Code of Conduct for members has occurred.

The Ombudsman found that under Section 69(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000 no action needed to be taken in respect of the matters investigated

Porthcawl Town Council

Report Date – 27/3/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman investigated 2 complaints made by a member of the public (“the first complainant”) and the Former Clerk (“the second complainant”) to Porthcawl Town Council (“the Town Council”) about a Member (“the Member”) of the Town Council.

It was alleged by the first complainant that the Member had used racial slurs and disrespectful language towards other members of the Town Council on social media.

It was alleged by the second complainant the Member had used disrespectful language towards the Former Clerk on social media and had refused to apologise at a Town Council meeting.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Monitoring Officer of Bridgend County Borough Council for consideration by its Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.

Bridgend Town Council

Report Date – 25/05/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Former Member (“the Former Member”) of Bridgend Town Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct (“the Code”).

The Complainant alleged that the Former Member, whilst out campaigning for local elections, spoke to a member of the public who said that he would be voting for another Councillor (the Complainant). The Former Member was alleged to have responded by saying “Oh, the wife beater”.

The evidence gathered during the investigation suggested that the Member breached a number of provisions in the Council’s Code of Conduct for elected members.

The Ombudsman considered whether the complaint related to the Former Member’s role on the Council and whether the Code applied at all times and was satisfied that the Code was engaged in full. The member of the public confirmed that he was aware of the Former Member’s status as a member of the Council, and given that she was campaigning for the elections, she would have been engaged in political activity at the time. The Ombudsman was therefore persuaded that the Former Member was acting in her capacity as Member at the time the alleged comment was made.

The Ombudsman considered, on the balance of probabilities, that the Former Member did refer to the Complainant as a “wife beater” and that this was a serious allegation to make against somebody without evidence to support it. In a small community, making such a statement had the potential to cause significant reputational damage that can become difficult to disassociate with. In making such a statement, there would have been little regard as to the impact this could have on the Complainant and those close to him. The Ombudsman considered that, in doing so, the Former Member failed to show necessary respect and consideration towards the Complainant and was therefore of the view that this action is suggestive of a breach of paragraph 4(b) of the Code.

Case law on the application of the Code for members in Wales has established that, for a breach of the “disrepute” provision to be found, a member’s conduct must impact upon their Authority’s reputation and/or the role of elected member and go beyond affecting their

personal reputation. It was felt that the Former Member's actions reflected poorly on her personally, but the Ombudsman also considered that the comment was made to a member of the public regarding a fellow councillor and was made in the Former Member's capacity as a Member of the Council at the time, when engaging in political activity. The Ombudsman was therefore persuaded that the behaviour would have an effect on the reputation of the office of Member. She considered that the Former Member's actions in this regard were suggestive of a breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code of Conduct.

The report on this investigation has therefore been referred to the Monitoring Officer of Bridgend County Borough Council, for consideration by the Council's Standards Committee. The Council's Standards Committee found that the Member had failed to comply with paragraphs 4(b) and 6(1)(a) of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee decided that the most appropriate sanction to be applied was a censure, and put on record that if the Former Member was still an elected Member, they would have imposed a suspension of 4 months. The member may appeal against this decision.

Chirk Town Council
Report Date – 13/06/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman's office received a complaint that a member ("the Member") of Chirk Town Council ("the Council") had breached the Code of Conduct.

The report on the investigation was referred to the Monitoring Officer of Wrexham County Borough Council for consideration by the County Council's Standards Committee. This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee's decision.

Bridgend Town Council
Report Date – 17/06/2024

Outcome

Referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a councillor ("the Member") of Bridgend Town Council ("the Council") had breached the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities ("the Code").

The report on the investigation was referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales. This summary will be updated following the Adjudication Panel for Wales's decision.

DISCLOSURE & REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

Bridgend Town Council
Report Date – 27/03/24

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

We received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Bridgend Town Council had breached the Code of Conduct.

The complainant was concerned that the Member had: failed to declare a personal and prejudicial interest in a Council meeting; had taken part in a discussion in the Council meeting when he should not have done given his interests; and that by taking part in the discussion, he had tried to influence a decision on the matter discussed to gain an advantage for his wife.

We found that Council members were asked to ratify draft minutes of a committee meeting. The draft minutes documented, in part, the Member’s wife’s behaviour at the committee meeting. The Member knew that his wife’s behaviour was the subject of a formal complaint to the Ombudsman’s office.

We found that the Member had a personal interest in the matter because Paragraph 10 of the Code states that members must regard themselves as having a personal interest in any business of their authority if a decision upon it might reasonably be regarded as affecting their wellbeing or that of a person with whom they live. Our Guidance also makes clear that a member will have a personal interest if the council business affects a close personal associate of the member, and a close personal associate includes close relatives – in this case the Member’s wife.

We also found that the Member had a prejudicial interest in the matter because we considered that a member of the public with knowledge of the fact that he took part in discussions about ratifying minutes of a meeting which documented his wife’s behaviour, and which behaviour was the subject of a formal investigation to the Ombudsman, would reasonably regard these as so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Member’s judgment of the public interest.

We found, given the Member had a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter, his subsequent actions in failing to disclose his interests and in taking part in discussions, without dispensation from the Authority’s Standards Committee, were suggestive of various breaches of Paragraph 14 of the Code including that he must not seek to influence a decision about matters.

We also found that the Member, in making the suggestions he did regarding amendments to the draft minutes, used his position improperly in an attempt to gain an advantage for his wife, and a disadvantage to the person who had complained about his wife’s behaviour, contrary to paragraph 7(a) of the Code. The Member’s failure to seek advice on the matter from the County’s Monitoring Officer, or to seek dispensation from the Standards Committee in order to make representations, was also suggestive of a breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Code because he acted in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office or authority into disrepute.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Monitoring Officer of Bridgend County Borough Council for consideration by its Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee determined that the Member had breached paragraphs 6(1)(a), 7(a), 11(1), 14(1)(a), 14(1)(c) and 14(1)(e) of the Code. The Standards Committee decided to suspend the Member for 6 months. The Member may appeal this decision.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Report Date – 17/05/2024

Outcome

Discontinued

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (“the Council”) may have breached the Code of Conduct. It was alleged that the Member became involved in the Complainant’s planning application despite being advised not to by the Council’s legal team.

During the investigation, we were informed by the Complainant that he wished to withdraw his complaint. In determining whether it would be in the public interest to continue with the investigation a number of factors were considered, specifically that the Member does not have a history of similar complaints, the Complainant’s wishes, and that the impact in this case of the Member’s actions did not extend beyond involvement in matters related to the Complainant and did not negatively impact the public, or raise wider matters of concern.

It also remained unclear the extent of the impact that the Member’s involvement had on the planning application, given that approval was granted and it was continuing to progress. Therefore, it was decided to discontinue the investigation.

SELFLESSNESS & STEWARDSHIP

Towyn & Kinmel Bay Town Council

Report Date – 06/12/2023

Outcome

Discontinued

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a member (“the Member”) of Towyn & Kinmel Bay Town Council (“the Council”) may have breached the Code of Conduct (“the Code”) whilst carrying out the Council’s food bank shopping. It was alleged that the Member used his own personal supermarket rewards card (a loyalty scheme that provides customers with the opportunity to accrue points that can be used to spend in the supermarket) to accrue points when purchasing foodbank shopping on behalf of the Council which he then used for his own personal shopping.

The Member denied the allegations and said that the points accrued were used to purchase additional items for the foodbank. The Ombudsman’s investigation found that the complainant had not witnessed the events complained about and had been advised of the allegations by 2 members of staff in the supermarket in question. One of the members of staff was unwilling to provide any evidence to the Ombudsman. The second member of staff said that she did not have any evidence and only knew what other people had told her. The Ombudsman found that there was an absence of any available witness evidence. A significant amount of time had lapsed since the events and there was no evidence available as to what specific purchases and on what dates such purchases were allegedly made by the Member.

The Ombudsman also noted that the Member had agreed with advice from the Monitoring Officer to no longer use his personal rewards card when purchasing the Council’s food bank shopping. In view of this and the absence of available evidence and the time that had lapsed since the events, the Ombudsman considered that it would not be proportionate to investigate the matter further.

OBJECTIVITY & PROPIETY

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Report Date – 24/01/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a referral that a member (“the Member”) of Vale of Glamorgan Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct (“the Code”) when he applied for a number of business grants.

The investigation considered whether the Member failed to comply with paragraphs 4(b), 4(d), 6(1)(a), 7(a), 7(b), 15(1)(b) and 15(2) of the Code.

We referred our report on our investigation to the Deputy Monitoring Officer of the Council for consideration by the local Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.

Pontypool Community Council

Report Date – 20/05/2024

Outcome

No action necessary

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a former member (“the Former Member”) of Pontypool Community Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct (“the Code”).

It was alleged that the Former Member divulged contents of a confidential report prepared and issued as part of an agenda for a confidential staffing committee, to a staff member who was directly impacted by the contents, causing them upset.

The Ombudsman’s investigation considered whether the Former Member had breached the Code by disclosing confidential information, or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature, without the express consent of a person authorised to give such consent, or unless required by law to do so.

The Former Member fully accepted that he disclosed the confidential information to the member of staff but acknowledged that, in hindsight, it was a mistake. He subsequently resigned his position of councillor. He provided a written apology to the Clerk.

The Ombudsman found that although the Former Member’s actions were suggestive of a breach of paragraph 5(a) of the Code of Conduct, his apology and his subsequent resignation, meant it would not be in the public interest to take further action.

The Ombudsman found that no action needed to be taken under Section 69(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000 in respect of the matters investigated.

INTEGRITY

St. Nicholas & Bonvilston Community Council
Report Date – 28/02/2024

Outcome

Referred to Standards Committee

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a Member (“the Member”) of the Vale of Glamorgan Council (“the Council”) had breached the Code of Conduct.

The investigation considered whether the Member failed to comply with Paragraphs 4(b), 4(c), 6(1)(a) and 7(1)(a).

We referred our report on our investigation to the Deputy Monitoring Officer of the Council for consideration by the local Standards Committee.

This summary will be updated following the Standards Committee’s decision.