

Flintshire County Council Standards Committee
Report on the outcome of an investigation into allegations relating to the conduct of
Councillor Charles Cordery of Buckley Town Council
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Case Reference 202105656

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Flintshire County Council's Standards Committee has produced this report in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

2. The Investigation

- 2.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales ("the Ombudsman") conducted an investigation into allegations about the conduct of Councillor Charles Cordery, a member of Buckley Town Council.

- 2.2 The Ombudsman concluded that Councillor Cordery's behaviour was suggestive of a breach of the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct for Members:

- (a) Paragraph 4(b): You must show respect and consideration for others.
- (a) 8(a)(iii): 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 your Authority's Officers, in particular by – (iii) the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

- 2.3 The Ombudsman report was sent to the Legal Services Manager of Flintshire County Council for consideration by the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council.

3. Initial Consideration by the Standards Committee

- 3.1 The Standards Committee considered the Ombudsman's report and determined that Councillor Cordery should be invited to make representations, either orally or in writing, in respect of the findings of the investigation and of the allegations that Councillor Cordery had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

4. Hearing of the Standards Committee

- 4.1 The Standards Committee held a hearing on 30 September 2024 and 21 October 2024.

- 4.2 The Standards Committee considered documentary and oral evidence presented to it and reached conclusions on facts relating to the allegations.

- 4.3 Having reached conclusions on the facts the Standards Committee determined that:

- (a) Councillor Cordery had breached 4(b) of the Code of Conduct for Members.
- (b) Councillor Cordery had breached paragraph 8(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct for Members.

- 4.4 The Standards Committee decided that Councillor Cordery should be suspended from being a member of Buckley Town Council for a period of six months.

- 4.5 The Standards Committee also made the following recommendations:
- (a) All town and community councils in Flintshire should ensure that councillors undertake training on the Code of Conduct within the first three months of a councillor being elected or appointed.
 - (b) Any town or community council within Flintshire that has not signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge should consider doing so and should discuss implementation within the council's activities.
 - (c) All town and community councils within Flintshire should ensure that induction of new councillors ensures that the councillors understand everything in their council's standing orders.
 - (d) Buckley Town Council should offer refresher training on the Code of Conduct to all its members.

4.6 The decisions of the Standards Committee are annexed to this report.

5. Distribution of this report

5.1 In accordance with the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001, a copy of this report will be sent to:

- (a) The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- (b) The Monitoring Officer of Flintshire County Council.
- (c) Councillor Cordery.

6. Monitoring Officer's Obligations

6.1 Following receipt of this report, the Monitoring Officer of Flintshire County Council must, in accordance with the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001:

- (a) For a period of 21 days publish the report on the relevant authority's website and make copies available for inspection by the public without charge at all reasonable hours at one or more of the authority's offices, where any person shall be entitled to take copies of, or extracts from, the report when made so available.
- (b) Supply a copy of the report to any person on request if he or she pays such charge as the relevant authority may reasonably require.
- (c) Not later than 7 days after the report is received give public notice, by advertisement in newspapers circulating in the area and such other ways as appear to the Monitoring Officer to be appropriate that copies of the report will be available and specify the date (being a date not more than seven days after public notice is first given) from which the period of 21 days will begin.