

Local Resolution Protocol

Cyffylliog Community Council

The Local Resolution Process

Issues which should be considered under this process

Low level complaints about Members, including:

- Minor complaints from Members about Members
- Minor complaints from Officers about Members
- Members alleged to have not shown respect and consideration for others either verbally or in writing
- Repetitive low level and frivolous complaints

Issues which should not be considered under this process

Complaints which must be directed to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,

including:

- Complaints instigated by a member of the public
- Serious complaints – breaches of the Code of Conduct/failure to disclose interests/bullying/abuse of position or trust/repeated breaches
- Complaints made by the Clerk/Proper Officer
- Vexatious, or malicious complaints
- Members' complaints about officers which should be dealt with using the Council's internal complaints process

The Process

The complaint

The complaint would need to be sent to the Clerk/Proper Officer of the Council to

undertake a first sift to ensure that the complaint is at a low level and should not be

dealt with by way of a complaint to the Ombudsman. If appropriate, therefore, the

Clerk/Proper Officer should firstly seek an early resolution of any such dispute by liaising informally with the individual members concerned prior to the resolution process described below. It is vitally important that the 'accused' member is given full details of the complaint against them so that in the interests of natural justice they are in a position to prepare their response to the accusation.

Resolution Process

The involvement of the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council in the following process is not to adjudicate on the complaint, but to attempt to get the members/officers involved to come to an agreement as to how the issue(s) could be resolved on an amicable basis.

The Clerk/Proper Officer will act as a facilitator for the resolution process below.

If the complaint is between Members other than the Chair of the Council, the Clerk/Proper Officer and the Chair will meet individually with the complainant and Member subject of the complaint to seek an agreed resolution.

If the complaint is between Members, one of whom is the Chair of Council, but not the Vice Chair, the Clerk/Proper Officer and the Vice Chair will meet with the complainant and Member subject of the complaint to seek an agreed resolution.

If the complaint has been made by an officer/employee, but not the Clerk/Proper

Officer, against a Member other than the Chair of Council, the Clerk/Proper Officer

and the Chair of Council will meet with the officer and the Member subject of the

complaint to seek an agreed resolution.

If the complaint has been made by an officer/employee, but not the Clerk/Proper

Officer, against the Chair of Council, the Clerk/Proper Officer and the Vice Chair of

Council will meet with the officer and the Chair to seek an agreed resolution.

If the complaint has been made by the Clerk/Proper Officer, then it is likely to be best

practice that this complaint is forwarded by way of a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Possible results of the process

If an agreement is reached by Members and/or officers during this Stage, then no

further action is required.

If agreement cannot be reached the aggrieved Member/officer would always have

the opportunity of referring the matter to the Ombudsman.

Examples of agreements might include issue of a letter of apology, a written undertaking or commitment not to breach the Code of Conduct in the future, a commitment to undertake training or an agreement that on the basis of the evidence

that no further action should be taken and the matter be closed.

Time for the process

It is the intention that all of the processes can be completed as quickly as possible to

resolve the issue. However exact timing will depend on the availability of individuals

to attend the meetings.

It is suggested that any meetings held with a view to discussing the issues of complaints and/or resolving matters are at the very least minuted, if not recorded. This is to ensure that agreements are captured. This will also be useful in the event that matters break down or escalate and need to be referred to the PSOW. It may also be useful as evidence in the event of further similar breaches of the conduct and future conduct.

Councils need to be clear on their powers in respect of code of conduct matters. The Ombudsman has seen examples of councils who have deemed it appropriate to fully investigate a code complaint, decide that there has been a breach and some have even thought it appropriate to consider the issue of a sanction. Investigations of possible breaches of the Code are matters for the Ombudsman. The Local Government Act 2000 gives him the authority to carry out such investigations. The Council has no legal authority to undertake such investigations or to make findings of a breach of the Code of Conduct, which are decisions that can only be reached by a Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

Adopted by the Council

Review Date June 2026