

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: THE PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

- i) The Annual Report of the PSOW 2017 – 2018 (dated 31st of March).
There were 270 Code of Conduct complaints (an increase of 14% from the last period) with 42% of these concerning “equality” and “respect”(Part 2, point 4(a) and (b) of the Code) , 19% for disclosure and registration of interests,(Part three and four), 16% for integrity issues, and the remaining for accountability, objectivity, propriety and other matters All of these involved Community Councils. Of the 247 referrals, 213 were closed after “initial consideration.”

The PSOW applies both an evidence and a Public Interest test, and only takes on the more serious complaints where an investigation is required in the public interest. See pages 11, 21-23 of PSOW report which is available on the website <http://www.ombudsman.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/PSOW-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2017-2018.pdf> – again, a hard copy will be available at the meeting.

The PSOW has had 10 referrals about National Parks - five each for Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons National Parks - but none of these have gone anywhere – see page 105 of the report.

- ii) The PSOW Casebook.
The most recent Casebook is for the month of July and it contains no cases relating to member conduct and standards.
- iii) The Public Services Ombudsman Bill.
This is going through the procedural process of the Welsh Assembly and is in the second stage of four. The PSOW hopes that the bill will be made law sometime in the spring.

The bill will, amongst other things, extend the powers of the PSOW to allow him to initiate investigations of his own volition without a referral, and, contains provision for the statutory imposition of a model complaint handling process. This seems primarily for cases of maladministration and public dissatisfaction with service delivery rather than the conduct of members.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note this report.