

<p>To Assembly Members: R George Mrs K Williams Ms R Evans S Thomas Ms J Watson W Powell</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Middle Aston Pentre Montgomery Powys SY15 6TA</p> <p>E-mail pandn@middleton.com Phone/fax 01588 638246</p>
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04 July 2011

Dear Assembly Member

Code of Conduct Complaints

The Powys Standards Committee and Community Sub-Committee have over a period of time expressed their concern over decisions of the Ombudsman not to refer complaints to the Standards Committee or Sub-Committee, notwithstanding that the Ombudsman has concluded that a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct has occurred.

The Ombudsman claims that should such matters be referred to the County Council Standards Committee/Sub-Committee it would be unlikely a sanction would be imposed. He claims this is based on experience over a number of years.

The experience of the County Council is limited to one referral to it when its Standards Committee imposed a sanction suspending the County Councillor from meetings of the Planning Committee for a period of four months. Therefore, the Standards Committee/Sub-Committee believes that it is better placed to make judgements about whether a sanction might be applied or not and would welcome the opportunity to determine such issues locally.

In addition the Standards Committee/Sub-Committee are of the belief that general standards of conduct would improve based on a variety of sanctions which the Committee has at its disposal rather than the current position where an identified potential breach does not attract any sanction and can lead the individual Councillor to believe that they have been cleared of any breach.

Despite several attempts by the Standards Committee/Sub-Committee and myself as Chair to promote this view with the Ombudsman we have not been successful and therefore we are seeking your assistance in persuading the Ombudsman to change his stance and allow local Standards Committees to be more effective.

Yours sincerely

Peter Swanson

Chairman – Powys County Council Standards Committee