

<b>Committee :</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>1, July, 2013.</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Allegations against members.</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Monitoring Officer.</b>
<b>Action:</b>	<b>For Information.</b>

## 1. Background.

This report is to inform the Committee of developments, since my last report, with regards to complaints against members. The report is based on information received from the Ombudsman.

## 2. Complaints.

### 2.1 Ombudsman's Reference 201203449 & 201203493

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a county councillor had used his Facebook page to solicit negative comments about a school and that some of these comments were offensive and unfounded.
<b>Decision.</b>
Not to continue with the investigation.
<b>Reasons.</b>
The Monitoring Officer intervened in the matter promptly and the councillor followed her advice. He removed the more offensive posts and warned other contributors not to name names or use bad language. The councillor himself did not put on offensive material nor did he name the school or the person. However, the Ombudsman accepted that it was the responsibility for the contents of the page was his. The member had not breached the codes simply by mentioning in public the fact that there was a complaint against him. There was no need to consider the matter further. The Monitoring Officer had dealt with the matter sufficiently. However he drew the councillor's attention to his concern at his manner of addressing the matter – for which more appropriate channels existed.

## 2.2 Ombudsman's Reference 2665/201204709

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a town councillor had not declared an interest in a letter which was on the agenda for a meeting of the town council and where the content may have related to his position on a local tourism and commerce body.
<b>Decision.</b>
No investigation.
<b>Reasons.</b>
The issue being discussed was not the contents of the letter but whether the contents of the letter should be read in public. The councillor therefore did not have an interest in this topic over an above other councillors.

## 2.3 Ombudsman's Reference. 201204544

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a county councillor had posted, on his Facebook page, that a local business had received a zero score under the food hygiene scheme. By that time the problems had been rectified, but this had damaged the complainant's business.
<b>Decision.</b>
No investigation.
<b>Reasons.</b>
The score was already public knowledge. The information was put on his page because the councillor was concerned that the business catered for children. The councillor had not fabricated any information and he offered his assistance in helping the complainant to put things right. When the information was posted on the page the original score still stood although steps had been taken to rectify the situation. The complainant had a right to reply through Facebook and it was a matter for the members of the public to take all the information available to them into account so that they could make a decision about whether to attend the venue.

#### **2.4 Ombudsman's Reference 201300346**

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a county councillor had secretly filmed and recorded a conversation and then put it on his Facebook page.
<b>Decision.</b>
The investigation continued.

#### **2.5 Ombudsman's Reference 3982/201301430**

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a county councillor had allowed offensive and libellous comments posted on his Facebook page.
<b>Decision.</b>
Considering whether or not to investigate.

#### **2.6 Ombudsman's Reference 201301307**

<b>Complaint.</b>
That a county councillor had behaved in a threatening manner towards the complainant.
<b>Decision.</b>
Considering whether or not to investigate.

### **3. A case that has been before the Standards Committee.**

The Committee held a hearing in respect of the complaint against Councillor A. M. Jones, Gwynedd Council on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2012. The Councillor has lodged an appeal with the Adjudication Panel for Wales and a date is awaited for the hearing.

### **4. Recommendation.**

The Committee is asked to note the information.