

**REPORT OF GROUP LEADER IN RELATION TO DUTY
UNDER SECTION 69 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021**

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Report by: | Darren Price | | | | |
| Political Group: | Plaid Cymru | | | | |
| No. of members: | 38 | No. trained on Code: | | 21 (55%) | |
| For the period: | 09/05/22 – 31/03/23 | | | | |
| <u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u> | | | | | |
| | Informal | Local Resolution (Stage) | | | PSOW |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Public | 0 | 0 | | | 7 (5 of which were the same complaint against 5 members). None of the 7 complaints were upheld. |
| Officers | 0 | 0 | | | 0 |
| Councillors | 0 | 0 | | | 1 (self-referred), currently at investigation stage |
| <u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u> | | | | | |

As Leader of the Council, and the Plaid Cymru Group, ensuring that members maintain standards in public life, in line with the Nolan principles is important to me.

As Leader, I aim to lead by example and am determined to act in ways which not only adhere to the principles, but promote them.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Code of Conduct Training which was provided by the authority during May 2022. However, I have served as an elected member for nearly 20 years within the City and County of Swansea and Carmarthenshire, and have attended Code of Conduct training previously.

21 members of the Plaid Cymru Group attended the Code of Conduct training which took place in May 2022, with 17 not attending. Of those members that did not attend, two were newly elected members.

A number of the others are more experienced members who have attended Code of Conduct training on previous occasions and have therefore been exposed to and trained in the principles which underpin the code.

I do however appreciate that the legislative framework and duties evolve, and this is why I have encouraged those members who were unable to attend the session in May 2022 to attend a 'mop-up' training session on the Code of Conduct which has been arranged on April 14th 2023. I will also be attending that session.

If they are unable to attend on that day, I will be urging them to access online resources that are available to them in terms of refreshing their appreciation of expected standards in public life.

My experience however is that members of my group do have a strong grasp of the standards expected of them and we strive to ensure that senior members of the group can advise and support newer members in these matters, often advising in terms of the need to declare interests on Council meetings etc.

As a group, we are also well supported by Council officers who are always prepared to offer advice, often pro-actively, on the Code.

As a Group Leader, I fully understand the need to ensure that members have received the recommended training for particular Committees, and I am content that this duty has been met.

Since being elected as Leader of the Council I have made a conscious effort to try and change the way that politics takes place within the Council. I have publicly called for a change in the political culture and believe that the experience of the past year, where cross-party discussions take place regularly, where cross-party motions are presented to full Council, and where debates are far more dignified than in previous years is proof of that change being put into action.

I appreciate that members of different political persuasions will not always agree, but I am certain that we can do so in a way which is respectful and maintains standards.

I firmly believe that the best way to ensure that standards in public life are not just maintained, but improved, is to lead by example, and this is what I will continue to seek to do.

I would be more than happy to attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues, and any concerns or recommendations which the Standards Committee feel are necessary in order to support high standards of conduct.

Signed: Darren Price

Dated: 24/3/2023