

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	
Date	20 July 2026	
Lead Officer	Matt Powell, Deputy Clerk	
Contact Officer	matthew.powell@flintshire.gov.uk	
Subject	Proposed updates to the Members Code of Conduct and Local Resolution Procedure	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority ("the Authority") of recommended changes to the Code of Conduct and Local Resolution Procedure and to seek approval to make updates to the Constitution to reflect these changes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Authority must adopt a Code of Conduct for Members ("Code of Conduct") pursuant to section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000
3. The adopted Code of Conduct is based on a prescribed national model which is contained within the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008 (as amended), and it must incorporate any mandatory provisions of the model code, which has recently been updated.
4. Also, in around 2013 all principal councils in Wales adopted a local resolution protocol (LRP) and around this time the Authority also adopted its LRP. This provides an informal process for dealing with low level complaints without the need for a formal complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales ("PSOW").
5. These protocols are reviewed by the Standards Committee on a rolling basis each authority term.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6. The Standards Committee has been consulted on the proposed changes to the LRP and Code of Conduct.

INFORMATION

Local Resolution Procedure

7. The Standards Committee reviewed the Authority's LRP in October 2025 who recommended that the Fire Authority approves the proposed changes to the LRP, as set out in Appendix 1.
8. Earlier that year, the PSOW had reviewed all local resolution protocols in Wales. This resulted in a working group being established which made a number of recommendations, which included:
 - i. That local resolution protocols should specify the standards of behaviour expected (and a suggested list was provided).
 - ii. That local resolution protocols should be clear that they only apply to low level complaints.
 - iii. The inclusion of a hearing stage ("Stage 3") is not recommended because of a risk of perceived predetermination and there not being a clear statutory basis for such a process.
9. Those recommendations were considered by the Standards Committee and their proposed changes to the LRP addresses the recommendations from the working group.

Code of Conduct

1. In 2021 Welsh Government commissioned Richard Penn (a former local authority chief executive and former chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales) to review the ethical framework and the mechanisms to support and enforcement ("the Pen Review").
2. Among other things, the Penn Review recommended inclusion of all the legal protected characteristics within the Model Code so that it is consistent with the Equality Act 2008. These changes were already largely voluntarily adopted by the Fire Authority following recommendations made by the Standards Committee in 2024.
3. However, more recently, the national Model Code was updated on the 5th of January 2026 by the Local Government (Standards Committees and Member Conduct) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2025, meaning the Code of Conduct required further review by the Standards Committee.

4. In summary, these changes to the Model Code are:

- i. Instead of protected characteristics being individually listed it now refers to “protected characteristics” as having the meaning given by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. This is to ensure that the Model Code captures all of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 now and in future.
 - ii. The Model Code also now provides that Members must carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. Whilst it is not a protected characteristic, Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 requires councils in Wales when making certain strategic decisions to have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
5. The changes to the Model Code were considered by the Standards Committee in April 2026 who recommended that the Authority incorporate these changes into its own Code of Conduct, as set out in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. **That the Authority approves the changes to the LRP and the Code of Conduct as identified in Appendixes 1 and 2.**
- ii. **That the Authority requests that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk arranges to amend the constitution to give effect to these changes.**

APPENDIXES

- 6. Appendix 1 - Updated LRP
- 7. Appendix 2 – Updated Code of Conduct

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Considered not relevant
Budget for 2024/25	Considered not relevant
Legal	The Fire Authority must adopt a Code of Conduct for Members ("Code of Conduct") pursuant to section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 which must incorporate any mandatory provisions of the model code of conduct which for the time being applies to that authority.
Staffing	Considered not relevant
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The recommended changes to the Code of Conduct adopt the legally protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2008.
Risks	None identified