

Meeting of:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 10 September 2020
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Report following Observations at Town and Community Council Committee Meetings
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update of the observations by Independent Standards Committee Members at Town and Community Council meetings
Report Owner:	Ms. Debbie Marles, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	Mrs. Karen Bowen, Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not require consultation to be undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by the Standards Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the roles of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives of the Council. • To assist this process, in March 2018, Independent Members of the Standards Committee agreed to undertake observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings. In March 2019 this was extended to observations being also undertaken of Town and Community Council meetings. • Following such observations, Independent Members report on a regular basis their findings to the Standards Committee. • The Monitoring Officer held six monthly meetings with Clerks of Town and Community Councils (in part) to brief them on generic observations received, with feedback to individual Clerks following each visit by an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. However, these were put on hold as a result of the Covid pandemic. 	

Recommendations

1. That the intention to continue to undertake observations of Town and Community Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings be noted.
2. That the dates of Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings (attached at Appendix A) from September 2020 onwards be noted.
3. That the dates of future meetings of Town and Community Council meetings and availability of access to virtual meetings be forwarded to Members of the Standards Committee as soon as they are available.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Having regard to the observations undertaken and the role of the Standards Committee.
- 2&3** That the Democratic Services Officer forward details of the dates of meetings of Town and Community Council meetings as soon as they are available.

1. Background

- 1.1** There are a number of roles and functions of the Standards Committee, one of which is:
 - (a) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives of the Council.
- 1.2** In considering the Committee's work programme report at its meeting in January 2018, the proposal for Independent Members of the Committee to observe Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings was agreed to be an appropriate opportunity to not only build on knowledge but to assist with the process of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.
- 1.3** As part of the Committee's work programme, it was agreed that Independent Members of the Standards Committee would attend a number of Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings during the Municipal Year 2019/20 to observe meetings with a view to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in line with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 1.4** Feedback reports would also be presented to the Standards Committee on a quarterly basis following the observations.
- 1.5** As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, some Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings were put on hold. However from September 2020 meetings have been reinstated to take place on a virtual basis. Some Town and Community Council meetings have also taken place virtually, but it is the intention to commence observations from September 2020 onwards. Discussions have, however, been ongoing on an ad hoc basis between the Monitoring Officer and individual Clerks as the need has arisen.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** Having regard to the calendar of meetings for Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Councils' meetings, Independent Members are requested to consider the dates and advise the Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer of meetings they intend to attend on a virtual basis.
- 2.2** Following attendance at meetings, it is expected that each Independent Member will report their findings to the Standards Committee on a regular basis. A checklist for use by Independent Standards Committee Members when attending meetings of the Vale Council and Town and Community Councils was agreed for use by the Committee at its meeting on 11th July, 2019.
- 2.3** The Monitoring Officer will also look to re-establish a schedule of virtual meetings going forward with Clerks of Town and Community Councils within the Vale of Glamorgan on a six monthly basis to discuss Monitoring Officer matters. The meetings, as Members of Standards Committee have been previously advised, will include discussions of matters of mutual concern and the sharing of information and good practice. The Monitoring Officer will also discuss any findings arising from the Independent Members of the Standards Committee observations of Town and Community Council meetings, the intention being to brief the Clerks with generic guidance. Feedback will also be provided to individual Clerks following attendance at the respective Town or Community Council meeting.
- 2.4** The current Vale of Glamorgan Council calendar of meetings is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives. It is intended that the process adopted within this report will aim to promote that role.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** Members will be remunerated for attendance under the allowance scheme agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution. Independent Members are able to claim for a maximum of 10 days per annum as detailed within the Council's Constitution.
- 4.2** In line with Welsh Government Regulations re social distancing, meetings will be observed, where appropriate, on a virtual basis.

Employment

- 4.3** Members will be remunerated for attendance under the allowance scheme agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution. Independent Members are able to claim for a maximum of 10 days per annum as detailed within the Council's Constitution.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The Council has a duty to establish and maintain a Standards Committee as defined by legislation as set out in the Standards Committees Rules and Regulations 2001 and the Standards Committee (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2006.
- 4.5** The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives.

5. Background Papers

None.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL - TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS: MAY 2020 - MAY 2021
(All meetings to commence at 6.00 pm and will be held remotely unless otherwise indicated)

	SEP 20	OCT 20	NOV 20	DEC 20	JAN 21	FEB 21	MAR 21	APR 21	MAY 21
Annual Meeting	14 Sep								10 May
Cabinet (2.00 pm)	07 Sep 21 Sep	05 Oct 19 Oct	02 Nov 16 Nov 30 Nov	07 Dec 21 Dec	11 Jan 25 Jan	08 Feb 22 Feb	08 Mar 22 Mar	12 Apr 26 Apr	
Council	21 Sep			07 Dec			01 Mar	26 Apr	
Community Liaison		06 Oct			26 Jan			27 Apr	
Democratic Services (4.00 pm)			16 Nov			01 Feb		19 Apr	
Audit	01 Sep 24 Sep			14 Dec		22 Feb		12 Apr	
Public Protection Licensing (10.00 am)	15 Sep	13 Oct	10 Nov	15 Dec	12 Jan	09 Feb	09 Mar	27 Apr	
Statutory Licensing (10.00 am)									
Planning (4.00 pm)	02 Sep 30 Sep		04 Nov 25 Nov	23 Dec	27 Jan	24 Feb	24 Mar	28 Apr	
Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee (5.00 pm)	15 Sep	13 Oct	10 Nov	08 Dec	12 Jan	09 Feb	09 Mar	13 Apr	
Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee	16 Sep	14 Oct	11 Nov	09 Dec	13 Jan	10 Feb	10 Mar	14 Apr	
Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	22 Sep	20 Oct	17 Nov	15 Dec	19 Jan	16 Feb	16 Mar	20 Apr	
Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee (5.00 pm)	17 Sep	15 Oct	12 Nov	10 Dec	14 Jan	11 Feb	11 Mar	15 Apr	
Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee	23 Sep	21 Oct	18 Nov	16 Dec	20 Jan	17 Feb	17 Mar	21 Apr	
Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee (10.00 am)	08 Sep 29 Sep			08 Dec			16 Mar		
Standards (10.00 am)	10 Sep 24 Sep	01 Oct	26 Nov		28 Jan		25 Mar		
Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison		19 Oct			18 Jan			19 Apr	

August Recess: 01 August – 31 August 2020

Easter Recess: 29 March – 09 April 2021 (Good Friday – 02 April, Easter Monday – 05 April 2021)

School Holidays – 2020

May Bank Holidays – Monday, 04 May Friday, 08 May, Monday, 25 May 2020
Half Term – Monday, 25 May – Friday, 29 May 2020
Summer – Monday 20 July – Tuesday 01 September 2020
Half Term – Monday 26 October – Friday, 30 October 2020
Christmas – Monday 21 December 2020 – Friday 01 January 2021

School Holiday - 2021

Half Term – Monday, 15 February – Friday, 19 February 2021
Easter – Monday, 29 March – Friday, 09 April 2021 (Good Friday – 02 April, Easter Monday – 05 April)
May Bank Holidays – Monday, 03 May, Monday, 31 May 2021
Half Term – Monday, 31 May – Friday, 04 June 2021