

Meeting of:	<b>Standards Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 13 July 2023</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Update on National Standards Committee Forum
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update following the meeting of the National Standards Committee Forum for Independent Standards Committee Members in Wales on 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Report Owner:	Debbie Marles, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	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 the Standards Committee
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first meeting of the All Wales Standards Committee Forum was held on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.</li> <li>• The latest meeting of the forum was held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and was attended by the Chair of the Standards Committee Richard Hendicott</li> <li>• The Chair will provide a verbal update at the Standards Committee on discussions held at the Forum meeting.</li> </ul>

## **Recommendation**

1. That the report and the verbal update provided by the Chair of the Standards Committee be noted.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. To apprise Committee.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In September 2019 Committee were apprised of the Terms of Reference and overview of the work of the North Wales Standards Forum and the feedback received regarding establishing a Standards Forum in South and East Wales.
- 1.2 The All-Wales Monitoring Officers Group therefore discussed the establishment of a National Forum for Wales with the Welsh Local Government Association who also kindly agreed to provide the secretariat support for the body. The Forum is a body for the sharing of good practice and the co-ordination of activity. The Forum is not a formal decision making body and will not have delegated powers to act on behalf of the Standards Committees in Wales.
- 1.3 The Standards Committee of the Vale of Glamorgan were also keen to be part of an All-Wales Forum.
- 1.4 Membership - in order to keep the size of meetings manageable, membership was suggested and agreed to be Chairs of Standards Committees with the Vice-Chairs as substitutes.
- 1.5 WLGA to send out the agendas, prepare minutes and prepare basic reports analysing practice across Wales.
- 1.6 Agendas for the meetings to be prepared by the Monitoring Officers Group with Members of the forum being able to suggest items of future business.
- 1.7 Meetings to be held once or twice per year – commencing 1 month or so after meetings of the Monitoring Officers Group in order that agendas can be agreed.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 The latest meeting of the Standards Forum was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and a copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached as an appendix to this report for the Committees information.
- 2.2 Having regard to agenda item 5 on the Forum agenda a separate report is also listed on the Standards Committee agenda for 13<sup>th</sup> July in respect of the Statutory guidance that was published in June 2023 in relation to the Group leader duty and other matters namely Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Council in Wales – supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000 , the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

- 2.3** With regard to Agenda Item 9 Gifts and Hospitality, Members of the Committee will recall that at the last meeting of the Committee it was resolved  
T H A T it be recommended to Cabinet that the Vale of Glamorgan Council's threshold for Gifts be amended in line with paragraph 1.5 of the report as follows: Gifts, material benefits or advantages – £25.00 or totalling £100.00 over a year from a single source.
- 2.4** The Chair will provide Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> July with a verbal overview of discussions held at the meeting.

### **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 with the sharing of good practice.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** Members are able to 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.

#### **Employment**

- 5.2** 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)**

- 5.3** 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.

### **6. Background Papers**

## National Standards Committees Forum - Wales

Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 @ 2pm, via Teams

### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting 27 January 2023.
3. Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) Research Advisory Board, Professor Mark Philp, the regime in England and implementation of recommendations from the Local Government Ethical Standards Report (2019).
4. Michelle Morris - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Update
5. Reflections on compliance with the duty on Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of the group and, the duty on the Standards Committee to comment on Group Leaders' compliance with that duty as part of its annual report. - All
6. a) Consider the Standards Committee remit to assist and support town and community councils with standards of behaviour at meetings. What can realistically be done to defuse high levels of political tension and challenges to officers. – All.

b) Exploration of good practice in engaging with town and community councils - All

7. Resourcing of Standards Committees. Are committees sufficiently funded to undertake the required activity. – All

8. Penn Review update – Monitoring responses to the consultation by Welsh Government. (Consultation closes 23 June 2023).

9. Minimum value for gifts and hospitality - All

10. Consideration of agenda items for future meetings - All

a. Local resolution protocols.

b. Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and Joint Standards Committees

11. Date of next meeting. To be confirmed, January 2024