

Meeting of:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	Friday, 20 September 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Standards Committee Forum
Purpose of Report:	To advise Committee of the North Wales Standards Committee Forum arrangements and feedback from colleagues from South and South East Wales.
Report Owner:	Debbie Marles, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	Debbie Marles, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not require consultation to be undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Standards Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apprise Standards Committee of the purpose, 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. 	

Recommendations

1. That Standards Committee note the update regarding the North Wales Standards Committee Forum; and
2. That Standards Committee consider exploring joint training with Local Authorities in South and South East Wales as the need arises.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. For Committee's information.
2. For Committee to consider the merits of a collaborative approach to training.

1. Background

- 1.1 Having raised with the Chair of the All Wales Monitoring Officer Group, the interest expressed by the Vale of Glamorgan's Standards Committee to acquire an understanding of the work of the North Wales Standards Committee Forum, and to ascertain the level of interest amongst Monitoring Officers in South and East Wales to establish similar arrangements, an item was put on the All Wales Monitoring Officers Meeting agenda in June 2019.
- 1.2 The paper attached at Appendix 1 was circulated as part of the agenda, which provides an overview of the purpose and terms of reference of the North Wales Standards Committee Forum when established in 2012. At the meeting it was highlighted that the Independent Members set the agenda for the Forum, and that more recently the Forum meets once or twice a year, meetings are peripatetic with the hosting Monitoring Officer being the only Monitoring Officer that attends; training where there is common interest is sourced however the Forum is fairly low key currently and primarily provides a network for Standard Committee Chairmen.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Lack of resources and capacity were raised as barriers to establishing a similar Forum in South and South East Wales by the Monitoring Officers in attendance at the meeting and no written observations have been received from the remaining Monitoring Officers from the relevant Local Authorities. Cardiff Council's Monitoring Officer suggested the possibility of exploring joint training between the Vale of Glamorgan Council's and Cardiff Council's Standards Committee in place of a committee meeting (subject to the agreement of Cardiff Council's Standards Committee).

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

- 3.1** The report has regard to the future business of the Standards Committee and refers to a possible collaborative approach should the need arise.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.
- 4.2** The allowances for Independent Members of Standards Committee are set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and will be funded from the existing budget.

Employment

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

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The Council has a statutory duty to establish and maintain a Standards Committee as defined by legislation as set out in the Standards Committee Rules and Regulations 2001 and the Standards Committee (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2006.

5. Background Papers

**North Wales Standards Committee Forum
Terms of Reference (2012)
(Now includes representatives from Ceridigion and Powys – 2017)**

The purpose of the Group was to achieve consistency across the 6 Local Authorities in relation to the work of Standards Committees. At the Forum, Local Authorities could share good practice and seek solutions to problems they were experiencing. Although many decisions would have to be made by the individual Standards Committees, there may be a time when the Forum would need to make a decision, such as whether to write to the Ombudsman collectively.

Members discussed Terms of Reference at length and agreed the following:-

- Membership – Chair, Vice-Chair and the Monitoring Officer with the Deputy Monitoring Officers or other Independent Members of Standards Committees attending as substitutes
- Voting – one vote per Local Authority with the Chair of the Forum having the casting vote
- Election of Chair and Vice Chair – every two years to provide consistency
- Administration – could move with the Chair, but would require succession planning. However, it was noted that Conwy was a central location for meetings of the Forum
- Frequency of Meetings – quarterly meetings with further meetings scheduled as and when required

AGREED-

That the North Wales Standards Committees Forum Terms of Reference be set as above.

- *Each meeting could have a small agenda followed by a Training Session*
- *Speakers from the Ombudsman's Office, Adjudication Panel for Wales and Welsh Government could address the Forum on their work*
- *The frequency of meetings would be discussed at the next meeting of the Forum*
- *Meetings could rotate between Local Authorities*
- *Only the Monitoring Officer of the host Local Authority would be in attendance to offer advice and facilitate the Training Session*
- *Monitoring Officers would decide on a Forward Work Programme for the Forum*
- *Conwy would still take ownership of the organisation of the Forum and production of agendas, with the host Local Authority providing an Officer to take the minutes*