

Meeting of:	<b>Standards Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 27 May 2021</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	<b>Report following Observations at Town and Community Council Committee Meetings</b>
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update of the observations by Independent Standards Committee Members at Vale of Glamorgan Council and 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
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Following such observations, Independent Members report verbally on a regular basis their findings to the Standards Committee.</li> </ul>

## **Recommendations**

1. That the verbal updates provided by Standards Committee Independent Members at the meeting be noted.
2. That the intention to continue to undertake observations of Town and Community Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings by Standards Committee Independent Members be noted.

## **Reason for Recommendations**

- 1-2 Having regard to the observations undertaken and the role of the Standards Committee.

### **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 As part of the Committee's work programme, it was agreed that Independent Members of the Standards Committee would attend meetings of Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings during the Municipal Year 2020/21 to observe meetings with a view to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in line with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 1.3 Feedback reports would also be presented to the Monitoring Officer and verbal generic updates of the reports presented to the Standards Committee by the Independent Member on a quarterly basis following the observations. Any observations that require specific discussion with the Managing Director of the Vale of Glamorgan Council or the Clerk / Chairman of a Town and Community Council are undertaken by the Monitoring Officer and / or Principal Democratic Services Officer.

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

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Standards Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 it was noted that it was the intention to continue to undertake observations of Town and Community Council meetings to ensure that all TCC's had received at least one visit within the last two years.
- 2.2 A programme of dates for observations to be undertaken was compiled and forwarded to Independent Members by the Principal Democratic Services Officer for their consideration.
- 2.3 The Clerks of the TCC's are advised by Democratic Services of the dates of the meetings the Independent member intends observing in order that

arrangements for the agenda and the link to the virtual meetings can be forwarded to the Member in time for the meeting.

- 2.4** Independent Members are requested to provide a verbal update following their observations at TCC meetings since March 2021 to the Standards Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> May.
- 2.5** With regard to the suggestions made as noted in the minutes of the last meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 the Monitoring Officer will provide an update at the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 in respect of the following:
- Absence of a Clerk at a Town and Community Council meetings;
  - Report to Community Liaison Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 regarding Independent Members' observations

### **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.