

Meeting of:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 15 July 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	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 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"> • 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 verbally on a regular basis their findings to the Standards Committee.

Recommendations

1. That the verbal updates provided by Standards Committee Independent Members at the meeting be noted.
2. That the Democratic Services Officer liaises with independent Members to ensure that any outstanding Town and Community Council visits are undertaken by December 2021.
3. 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 and a further schedule of visits be drawn up following the Local Government elections in 2022.

Reason for Recommendations

- 1-3** 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 (TCC) 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 TCC 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 27th May, 2021 it was noted that it was the intention to continue to undertake observations of Vale of Glamorgan Council and TCC meetings.
- 2.2 The Clerks of the TCCs 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.

- 2.3 With regard to meetings of TCCs undertaken to date there are a few that remain to be visited and the Democratic Services officer will liaise with the Independent Members to ensure that all TCCs have been visited by December 2021.
- 2.4 Independent Members that have undertaken visits since the last meeting of the Committee on 27th May are requested to provide a verbal update of their observations at TCC meetings to the Standards Committee on 15th July.
- 2.5 Unless advised by the Monitoring Officer and / or Deputy Monitoring Officer that an observation of a TCC or a Vale of Glamorgan Council meeting should be undertaken it is intended that a further schedule of observations be drawn up following the Local Government Elections in 2022.

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.