

Meeting of:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 29 January 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Standards Committee quoracy – Governance review, clarification and ratification of decisions.
Purpose of Report:	To provide an update on the remaining procedural matter under review.
Report Owner:	V. Davidson, Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
Responsible Officer:	Amy Rudman, Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not involve any consultation with other parties.
Policy Framework:	This report is a matter for consideration by the Standards Committee.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A governance review identified that the Standards Committee’s earlier interpretation of quorum composition under the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 required clarification. It has since been confirmed that, while the Town and Community Council (TCC) representative is a co-opted member of the Committee, they cannot be counted as an Independent Member for quorum purposes. During 2024, attendance by Independent Members was on occasion affected by personal circumstances and technical issues, and several meetings proceeded on the good faith assumption that the presence of the TCC representative satisfied the Independent Member element of the quorum. The correct interpretation was clarified in November 2024, and all subsequent meetings, which are held remotely, have been convened in accordance with that clarification. Following the finalisation of the Committee’s Annual Report 2024/25, the issue was revisited to ensure that all historical decisions and records were fully compliant and accurately reflected the procedural requirements. To provide full reassurance, a comprehensive review of all Standards Committee meetings held during 2024/25 and 2025/26 Municipal years (to date) was undertaken in October 2025. The review confirmed that only three pre-November 2024 meetings were inquorate under the clarified interpretation. It emerged that the May 2025 meeting of the Committee was quorate at the outset but became inquorate when an Elected Member joined the meeting late. The meeting was not adjourned at that point; however, the affected agenda item 	

was later re-confirmed at a subsequent properly constituted meeting in September 2025 to ensure procedural compliance.

- The process provided assurance that all Standards Committee decisions held during the Municipal years 2024/25 and 2025/26 (to date) were transparent, procedurally sound, and compliant with the statutory quorum requirements under the Regulations
- All affected decisions were taken in good faith based on the Committee's previous understanding of the quorum requirements and required formal confirmation to ensure full procedural validity.
- A report was presented to the Committee on the 20th November 2025 to seek the Committee's approval to ratify and confirm the dispensations granted at two of the affected meetings in respect of two Members. The Committee subsequently resolved that the dispensations granted at the 29th July and 21st November 2024 Committee meetings be confirmed to ensure that the relevant decisions were properly ratified and had full legal effect.
- In relation to one previous item considered by the Committee during 2024, the Monitoring Officer advised at the 20th November Committee meeting that they were in consultation with the parties involved to address the procedural matter identified during the governance review to determine the most appropriate and proportionate resolution, and that a further report would be presented to the Committee in early 2026 once those discussions had concluded.
- The Monitoring Officer has not yet received a formal response from the parties involved and is therefore required to recommend that the report be deferred to the March 2026 Standards Committee meeting.

Recommendation

1. T H A T the report be deferred to the March 2026 Standards Committee meeting.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To ensure that the outstanding procedural matter identified during the governance review is addressed appropriately and transparently, pending a consultation response being received from the relevant parties involved.

2. Background

- 2.0 Under the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001, a quorum for the Committee requires:
 - (a) at least three members are present, including the chairperson, and
 - (b) at least half the members present (including the chairperson) are independent members.
- 2.1 Regulation 2 provides the interpretation of the various definitions used within the regulations:
 - (1) Member, unless the context otherwise requires, means in the case of a local authority, an elected member of that authority, and
 - (2) Independent Member means a member of a standards committee who is not a member, an officer, the spouse or civil partner of a member or an officer of a relevant authority or a community council.
- 2.2 Members of town and community councils were incorporated into the definition of Independent Members by virtue of Regulation 2(2)(c) of the Local Government (Standards Committees, Investigations, Dispensations and Referral) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Therefore, Town and Community (TCC) representative cannot be counted as an independent member for the purpose of quorum of the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 A governance review identified that the Committee's earlier understanding of this requirement had been interpreted more broadly than intended, with the TCC representative being counted, in good faith, toward the Independent Member element of the quorum. This occurred at a time when Independent Member attendance was unavoidably affected by personal and technical circumstances. This crystallised in November 2024. From that point onwards, all Standards Committee meetings were held in line with the clarified interpretation. The only exception was a meeting held in May 2025 which became inquorate part way through when an Elected Member joined part way through proceedings. The affected items were formally reconfirmed later in this Municipal year.
- 2.4 Although the issue had been addressed prospectively from November 2024, a comprehensive review of all meetings held during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 Municipal years (to date) was subsequently undertaken in October 2025. The review was initiated as part of the Annual Report assurance process, which

identified the need to formally regularise earlier decisions to ensure full compliance, transparency, and good governance.

- 2.5** The review confirmed that three meetings held prior to November 2024 were not quorate under the clarified interpretation and that those decisions should be formally confirmed to ensure procedural completeness.
- 2.6** At the 20th November Committee Meeting, the Committee was asked to reconsider two dispensations granted, one at the 29th July 2024 committee meeting and one at the 21st November Committee meeting, only one dispensation had been relied upon during a meeting of another Council Committee, on an agenda item which was before the Committee for noting. There was no vote taken on the item. The Member in respect of whom the dispensation was granted had been notified.
- 2.7** After consideration, the Committee resolved that the dispensations granted at the 29th July and 21st November 2024 Committee meetings be confirmed to ensure that the relevant decisions were properly ratified and had full legal effect. As such, the relevant Elected Members were informed.
- 2.8** At the same meeting the Committee also resolved, in relation to one previous matter considered on the 29th July 2024, that the Committee noted that the Monitoring Officer was in communication with the relevant parties to address the procedural matter identified through the governance review, and that a further report would be presented to the Standards Committee in early 2026, once those discussions had concluded. This was to ensure that the outstanding procedural matter identified during the governance review was addressed appropriately and transparently, following consultation with the relevant parties and that the Committee be updated through a further report before determining any further action.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1** At the meeting on the 20th November 2025, the Committee resolved that the dispensations granted at the 29th July and 21st November 2024 Committee meetings be confirmed to ensure that the relevant decisions were properly ratified and had full legal effect. As such, the relevant Elected Members were informed.
- 3.2** In relation to the third and remaining matter considered by the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer held initial discussions with one of the parties, and a meeting with the other party took place to ensure that all perspectives were fully understood before determining the most appropriate and proportionate way forward.
- 3.3** The Monitoring Officer has subsequently contacted the parties involved to seek a response to the correspondence originally sent on the 17th of November 2025. Further attempts to contact were made on the 8th of January 2026 and continue to be attempted. However, at the time of publication of this report, the Monitoring Officer has not yet received a formal response from the parties

involved and is therefore required to recommend that the report be deferred to the March 2026 Standards Committee meeting.

- 3.4** Any updates in relation to this matter that have developed since the publication of this report will be provide to the committee verbally at the January 2026 Standards Committee meeting, subject to any matters of confidentiality.

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

- 4.1** The Standards Committee shall have the following roles and functions:
- (a)** promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-Opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives,
 - (b)** assisting Councillors, Co-Opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct,
 - (c)** advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct,
 - (d)** monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct,
 - (e)** advising, training, or arranging to train Councillors, Co-Opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct,
 - (f)** granting dispensations to Councillors, Co-Opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct,
 - (g)** dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matters referred to that officer by the Public Services Ombudsman,
 - (h)** the exercise of (a) to (g) above in relation to the Community Councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those Community Councils;
 - (i)** overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.

5. Climate Change and Nature Implications

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

6. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

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

Employment

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

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 6.3** Regulation 24(1) of the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 (“the Regulations”) states that no business shall be transacted at a meeting of a standards committee, unless at least three members are present, including the chairperson; and at least half the members present (including the chairperson) are independent members.
- 6.4** A member of a Town and Community Council is not considered an Independent Member by virtue of Regulation 2. It states, where relevant, that an independent member means a member of a standards committee who is not a member, an officer, the spouse or civil partner of a member or an officer of a relevant authority or a community council.
- 6.5** Notwithstanding the above, the Council’s Constitution at paragraph 8.3 (pg. 64) states:

8.3 Quorum:

A meeting of the Standards Committee shall only be quorate when:

- (a) At least three members are present (including the Chair) and
 - (b) At least half the members present (including the Chair) are independent members.
- 6.6** As a result of the governance review undertaken in 2025, it was identified that two meetings, and three items had proceeded on a broader interpretation of this requirement, with the TCC representative counted toward the Independent Member element of the quorum in good faith. The clarification confirmed that three meetings were inquorate under the correct interpretation.
- 6.7** The corrective action proposed in this report, namely, the formal ratification of affected decisions at a properly constituted meeting, ensures full procedural validity and compliance with the Regulations.
- 6.8** This approach also reflects the Council’s commitment to transparency, and good governance in its decision making. All affected members have been notified and consulted, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee have been actively engaged throughout the process.

7. Background Papers

[Report 1 - Standards Committee quoracy – Governance review, clarification, and ratification of decisions.](#)