

Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 30 July 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I) (If yes, why)	Not Applicable.
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (15.14 of the Constitution) (If yes, why)	Not applicable.
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Group Leader Duty Compliance
Portfolio Holder:	No Relevant Cabinet Member
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Corporate Resources
Lead Officer:	Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 What is this report about?

- 1.1 To enable the Standards Committee to fulfil its statutory duty to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties placed upon them by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2 To provide the Committee with an opportunity to receive verbal representations from Political Group Leaders regarding the actions they have taken to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their respective groups.
- 1.3 To consider the arrangements in place to support compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct and the co-operation requirements between Political Group Leaders and the Standards Committee
- 1.4 To review the continued suitability of the Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-forma and the Vale of Glamorgan Political Group Leader Threshold Criteria.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	T H A T the verbal representations made by Group Leaders present at the meeting at be noted.	To meet the Standards Committee duty to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties of the 2021 Act.
2.2	T H A T the Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-forma (Appendix A) and (Appendix B) be reviewed and confirmed as fit for purpose.	To ensure the Committee continues to have effective mechanisms for assessing compliance with statutory duties.
2.3	T H A T the completed Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-formas be considered under the Part II report later on the agenda.	To assist the Committee in determining whether Political Group Leaders have complied with their statutory responsibilities.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 Welsh Government published Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales in June 2023, setting out duties relating to standards of conduct, the role of Political Group Leaders and the responsibilities of Standards Committees supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 3.2 The Standards Committee considered the guidance on 13 July 2023 and subsequently authorised updates to its Group Leader reporting arrangements to ensure alignment with Part 2 Section 4, paragraphs 4.24, 4.29 and 4.36 of the guidance.
- 3.3 In September and November 2023, the Committee approved a revised Group Leader Compliance Pro-forma and adopted Threshold Criteria to assist in determining whether Political Group Leaders are meeting their statutory duties.
- 3.4 The Committee has since met annually with Political Group Leaders to review compliance and receive assurances regarding standards of conduct within political groups. Once each of the Group Leaders present have addressed the Committee, and Standards Committee Members have posed any related questions, all Political Group Leaders will be asked to vacate the meeting so that the Standards Committee may deliberate in private based on the threshold criteria on the role of a Political Group Leader in the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

- 4.1 Section 52 of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, places duties on Political Group Leaders to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to co-operate with the Standards Committee.
- 4.2 Welsh Government guidance advises that Political Group Leaders should meet with the Standards Committee at the beginning of each municipal year to discuss standards arrangements and report on actions taken to comply with their duties. However, should areas of concern arise regarding a Group during the course of the municipal year, the relevant Group Leader may be required to attend Standards Committee as advised by the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.3 The last Annual Meeting between Political Group Leaders and the Standards Committee took place on the 17th of July 2025. All four Political Group Leaders were present at the meeting to make comment on the duties placed upon them. Having regard to discussions held at that meeting with political Group Leaders on the completion of the Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-formas and the Vale of Glamorgan Political Group Leader Threshold Criteria, the Standards Committee resolved that the 2024-25 Standards Committee Annual Report be amended to reflect the Committee's satisfaction, following assessment, that the statutory duties placed on Group Leaders had been met.
- 4.4 Political Group Leaders are expected to encourage high standards of behaviour, support training and development, promote civility and respect, and work constructively with the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee.
- 4.5 Group Leaders should take reasonable steps to ensure their members co-operate with standards processes and address concerns relating to conduct as early as possible.
- 4.6 The Committee has previously adopted Threshold Criteria against which compliance is assessed and approved a standard pro-forma to assist Group Leaders in evidencing the actions they have taken.
- 4.7 With regard to Vale of Glamorgan Elected Independent Members, as they are not members of a Group, the Monitoring Officer has agreed to inform Independent Members of any changes / amendments to guidance or processes as required.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

- 5.1 The report has been informed by Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales.
- 5.2 Evidence is provided through the completed Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-formas submitted by Political Group Leaders. A copy of the proforma approved by the Committee is attached at **Appendix A** to this report.

- 5.3 The threshold criteria which the Standards Committee has previously agreed and will use to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties of the 2021 Act is attached at **Appendix B** to this report.
- 5.4 Group Leaders for the Vale of Glamorgan Council i.e. Labour, Conservative, Plaid Cymru and Llantwit First Independents have been invited to the meeting of the Standards Committee and requested to complete a pro-forma for presentation to the Committee regarding compliance with their duties. Verbal representations made by Group Leaders at the meeting will assist the Committee in assessing compliance with statutory duties.
- 5.5 Previous decisions and discussions of the Standards Committee have informed the development of the Threshold Criteria and reporting arrangements.

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

- 6.1 The Standards Committee will consider the evidence presented by Political Group Leaders and determine whether it is satisfied that the statutory duties have been fulfilled.
- 6.2 The Committee's conclusions will inform the Standards Committee Annual Report.
- 6.3 Any identified areas for improvement or further support will be communicated through the Monitoring Officer and future engagement with Political Group Leaders.

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

- 7.1 The report supports good governance, accountability and ethical decision-making across the Council.
- 7.2 Promoting high standards of conduct helps to maintain public confidence in local democracy and supports effective service delivery.

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

- 8.1 Long Term – Supports the development and maintenance of a positive standards culture across the Council.
- 8.2 Prevention – Encourages early intervention and informal resolution of conduct concerns before escalation.
- 8.3 Integration – Links standards, governance, member development and democratic accountability.
- 8.4 Collaboration – Requires co-operation between Political Group Leaders, Members, the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee.

8.5 Involvement – Engages elected Members and Group Leaders directly in maintaining and improving standards of conduct.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed because the report relates to the governance and monitoring functions of the Standards Committee and does not propose any change in policy, service provision or operational arrangements that would impact upon persons with protected characteristics.

11.2 The Council has a duty to establish and maintain a Standards Committee, as defined by the Standards Committees Rules and Regulations 2001 and the Standards Committee (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2006.

11.3 Having regard to the duty under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Standards Committee has a duty to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties of the 2021 Act.

12.0 Key Contacts

12.1 Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?

Lead Officer: Victoria Davidson Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services vdavidson@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Democratic Services Officer: Amy Rudman Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer. 07784 239 277 arudman@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
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Appendix

Appendix A – Group Leader Code of Conduct Compliance Pro-forma.

Background Documents

Published Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales - https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023_07/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-for-principal-councils-in-wales.pdf.

[Report – Standards Committee 17th July 2025](#)

[Report – Standards Committee 10th June 2024](#)

[Report – Standards Committee 23rd November 2023](#)

[Report – Standards Committee 28th September 2023](#)

[Report – Standards Committee 13th July 2023](#)

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>	
Report by:	
Political Group:	
No. of members:	
For the period:	
<u>Compliance with Mandatory Training [25.1.2(e)]</u>	
2022 Induction & Development Programme compliance: 100%. Training offered since last Pro-Forma: Code of Conduct Refresher Training – 3rd December 2025. Members completed: Members pending:	
<u>Disclosure and Barring Service Checks</u>	
All Elected Members have a basic DBS check in place. All Members of the ***** Group who require an enhanced DBS check are compliant.	
<u>Declarations of Interest [19.3]</u>	
Declarations made verbally but pending written form:	
<u>Gifts & Hospitality [19.4.3]</u>	
Registrations received since last Pro-Forma:	

Number, Source and Level of Complaint(s) / Concern(s)

Part 2 section 4.29 of the Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory

Guidance states: Political group leaders will want to ensure they are able to evidence the steps they have taken to help create an environment in which members demonstrate appropriate standards of behaviour, undertake appropriate training and address, with members, instances where standards of behaviour falls short of that expected. It is a matter for individual group leaders how they choose to evidence their compliance with this guidance, but it may include notes of meetings, copies of correspondence, audits of member training on issues such as equality and the Code of Conduct and action taken to address any gaps in that training.

	Informal	Local Resolution (Stage)			PSOW
		1	2	3	
Public					
Officers					
Councillors					

Steps taken to Promote Compliance

As Group Leader, how have you achieved the following within your Group?

- *Using influence to support a positive culture, being proactive in promoting high standards of conduct in the group and addressing issues of alleged non – compliance as soon as they arise;*
- *Demonstrating personal commitment to and attending and participating in relevant development or training around equalities and standards including on the Code of Conduct;*
- *Actively encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards including in relation to the Code of Conduct;*
- *Ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for participating on that Committee;*
- *Promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings;*
- *Supporting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer to achieve local resolution;*
- *Encouraging a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;*
- *Attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;*

- *Drive forward work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;*
- *Work with the Standards Committee to proactively identify, consider and tackle patterns of inappropriate behaviour;*
- *Work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council and when any issues identified involve more than one political group.*

Please add your written representations below:

Signed :

Dated :

Source and Level of Complaint(s) / Concern(s):

Statutory and Non - Statutory Guidance issued June 2023 (and updated in July 2023 and August 2023.)

Threshold Criteria - Role of Leader of Political Group -

Section 52 of the Local Government 2000 Act as amended by section 62 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires that a leader of a political group consisting of members of a County Council or County Borough Council in Wales –

1. must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group, and
2. must co-operate with the council's standards committee (and any sub - committee of the committee) in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.

The Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance includes at Part 2 the requirements to establish -

“the threshold which the Standards Committee will use to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties of the 2021 Act” .

Following discussions with Group Leaders and the Standards Committee at the Vale the following suggestions have been put forward with regard to the threshold to be used it being noted that the threshold would not have regard to historical matters which arose before the duty was in place:

1. Group Leaders to make themselves available to meet with the Monitoring Officer, Chair of the Standards Committee and Standards Committee as required,
2. Group Leaders to meet with the Standards Committee on an annual basis at the start of each Council year. However, should areas of concern arise regarding a Group during the year the relevant Group Leader may be required to attend before Standards Committee as advised by the Monitoring Officer,
3. Group Leaders to meet with the Monitoring Officer and Chair of Standards Committee on a six monthly basis,
4. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that Members within their Group make themselves available to meet with the Monitoring Officer as required,
5. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that Members within their Group co-operate with the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee when an issue is referred to the Monitoring Officer and or the Standards Committee,
6. Group Leaders to record any areas of concern in their Groups and raise them with the Monitoring Officer in a timely manner including identifying any areas requiring training by any Members of the Group,
7. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure Member attendance at mandatory training events,

8. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that where there is a policy decision by the Council or Cabinet that this is adhered to by Members of their respective Groups,
9. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that factually inaccurate information is not put into the public domain by their Members so as not to damage the reputation of the Council,
10. Group Leaders to ensure that the relevant DBS checks are applied for by Members, as and when required, in line with Cabinet resolution and that Members engage with the process in a timely manner,
11. Group Leaders to complete the Group Leader proforma, promoting compliance with the Code of Conduct, as required,
12. Group Leaders to support within their Group's decisions of the Standards Committee and /or Adjudication Panel for Wales.
13. Group Leaders to support within their Groups decisions of the Local Dispute Resolution Panel.