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| <b>Meeting of:</b>                                                                 | Standards Committee                                                         |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                                                            | Thursday, 30 July 2026                                                      |
| <b>Relevant Scrutiny Committee:</b>                                                | No Relevant Scrutiny Committee                                              |
| <b>Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I)</b><br>(If yes, why)        | Not applicable                                                              |
| <b>Urgent Decision Procedure Used (15.14 of the Constitution)</b><br>(If yes, why) | Not applicable                                                              |
| <b>Item Type</b>                                                                   | Part I                                                                      |
| <b>Report Title:</b>                                                               | <b>Monitoring Officer Update Report</b>                                     |
| <b>Portfolio Holder:</b>                                                           | No Relevant Cabinet Member                                                  |
| <b>Strategic Leadership Team:</b>                                                  | Director of Corporate Resources                                             |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>                                                               | Victoria Davidson, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services |

## 1.0 What is this report about?

- 1.1 The report provides an update in respect of matters addressed at the last All Wales Monitoring Officer Group Meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

## 2.0 What are the Recommendations?

|     | <b>Recommendations – What and How?</b>                                                | <b>Reason for Recommendation – Why?</b>    |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | T H A T the contents of the report be noted.                                          | To apprise Committee.                      |
| 2.2 | T H A T the verbal update provided by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting be noted. | Having regard to the information provided. |

### **3.0 What is the background to this report?**

3.1 The All Wales Monitoring Officers' Group (MOG) of all Local Authorities in Wales including National Park Authorities, South Wales Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities meets on a regular basis to share good practice, receive and consider advice, as well as acting as a consultee on occasions by organisations including Welsh Government, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales's office (PSOW) and the WLGA etc

### **4.0 What issues are there to be considered?**

4.1 The last All Wales Monitoring Officer Group (MOG) Meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

4.2 At the recent Welsh Monitoring Officer's meeting, representatives from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales provided an update on current complaint trends and performance. It was reported that the Ombudsman's office has significantly reduced its backlog of cases and increased the number of investigations concluded, resulting in improved timeliness of decision-making. While complaint volumes have increased slightly, revised working practices, including more proportionate handling of cases and improved communication with Monitoring Officers, have been positively received. Recent case examples were also shared, demonstrating the range of sanctions available where breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct are established, including censure and suspension.

4.3 Members also received an update on the development of national induction materials for councillors covering ethics and standards. This work is being undertaken by a Monitoring Officer working group in partnership with the WLGA and aims to provide a consistent national approach to member induction following future local government elections. The materials will include guidance on the Member's Code of Conduct, ethical decision-making, standards of behaviour, and the responsible use of social media, recognising the increasing risks associated with online engagement. Draft materials are expected to be circulated to Monitoring Officers shortly for consultation before being finalised.

4.4 The meeting also included discussion of the Association of Monitoring Officers and opportunities to strengthen professional support and collaboration across Wales. It was noted that future subscription arrangements will move towards organisational membership, and members were reminded of the availability of the Association's professional helpline. The Welsh Monitoring Officer network continues to provide a valuable forum for sharing good practice and discussing emerging governance and ethical issues affecting local authorities.

4.5 Finally, the Chair invited suggestions for agenda items for the next National Standards Committee Forum. Recent discussions within the Forum have focused on sharing approaches to standards matters across authorities, including the operation of standards committees, dispensations and hearing procedures. The Forum continues to provide an important opportunity for authorities to exchange good practice and promote greater consistency in the application of ethical standards across Wales.

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

- 5.1** This report is informed by discussions and updates received at the All Wales Monitoring Officers' Group meeting held on 5th June 2026. Information has been provided by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and representatives from local authorities across Wales.
- 5.2** The report also reflects current developments in national guidance and emerging good practice relating to standards, ethics and governance, together with information shared by Monitoring Officers to support consistency of approach across Welsh local authorities.
- 5.3** The contents of this report are provided to ensure that the Standards Committee is kept informed of relevant national developments which may influence its work and the promotion of high standards of conduct within the Authority.

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

- 6.1** The Monitoring Officer will continue to represent the Council at meetings of the All Wales Monitoring Officers' Group and will keep the Committee informed of relevant developments relating to standards, ethics and governance.
- 6.2** Any national guidance, best practice or legislative developments arising from future meetings will be considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the Council's procedures, member development and governance arrangements.

## **7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?**

- 7.1** The report supports the Council's commitment to strong governance, openness and accountability by keeping the Standards Committee informed of national developments relating to ethical standards and governance.
- 7.2** Maintaining effective ethical governance arrangements contributes to public confidence in the Council's decision-making and supports the delivery of high-quality, accountable public services in accordance with the Council's corporate objectives.

## **8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?**

- 8.1** 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 with the sharing of good practice.

## **Resources**

### **9.0 Finance**

9.1 Members are able to be remunerated for attendance under the allowance scheme agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution for approved duties. Independent Members are able to claim for a maximum of 15 days per annum as detailed within the Council's Constitution.

### **10.0 Workforce**

10.1 Independent Members are appointed for a period of not less than 4 no more than 6 years in accordance with Regulation 18(i) of the Standards Committees (Wales Regulations) 2001 (as amended) as amended by Regulation 28a of the Local Government (Standards Committees Investigations, Dispensations and Referral) (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2016 and may be re-appointed for one further consecutive term not exceeding 4 years.

### **11.0 Legal and Equalities**

11.1 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.

### **12.0 Key Contacts**

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

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| Lead Officer:<br><br>Victoria Davidson Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services.<br><a href="mailto:vdavidson@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk">vdavidson@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</a> | Democratic Services Officer:<br><br>Amy Rudman – Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer.<br>07784 239 277<br><a href="mailto:arudman@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk">arudman@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</a> |
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## **Background Documents**

None.