



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MR CRAIG GRIFFITHS

13th January 2025

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Attendance of elected members of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council at the Standards Committee

Purpose of the Report:

1. To convene a meeting between elected members and the Neath Port Talbot Council Standards Committee to discuss the remit of the Standards Committee and how the Standards Committee can assist elected members in discharging their own personal duties.

Background:

2. As part of its 2022/2023 Annual Reports, members of the Standards Committee wished to embark on further engagement with elected members in order to dispel the myths of the

Standards Committee and it was felt arranging a meeting with a cross section of elected members would be beneficial for members to understand more about their work programme.

3. Following an approach to the respective Group Leaders, the following members have been nominated to attend Standards Committee to facilitate this discussion:
 - Cllr Saif Rahaman
 - Cllr Gareth Rice
 - Cllr Andrew Dacey
 - Cllr Bob Woolford
 - Cllr James Henton
4. Questions have been provided in advance to Group Leaders to afford the opportunity to consider the issues that the Standards Committee would like to raise, and it was thought appropriate that similar questions be provided to elected members in advance. A copy of the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee was also provided to elected members in advance.
5. The questions are set out set out below:
 - (a) *How appropriate to you believe the Code of Conduct is??*
 - (b) *What steps do you take to ensure high standards of conduct?*
 - (c) *What do you understand the role of the Standards Committee to be?*
 - (d) *Is there any work you feel the Standards Committee should be undertaking over the next year to help you with your role?*
 - (e) *How can the Standards Committee become more active in promoting ethical conduct among Councillors / Co-opted Members?*
 - (f) *The Ombudsman, Adjudication Panel for Wales and the High Court has taken a view on politicians (and in some*

cases senior officers) having a “thick skin” and on political banter being part of the political landscape. What are your own views and how do you ensure that the line is not crossed.

- (g) What are your views on the Authority’s Code of Conduct training? How do you rate its effectiveness? How could it be improved so as to raise the ethical standards of Councillors / Co-opted Members?*
- (h) Training for Councillors / Co-opted Members is vitally important. How can the Standards Committee tackle those that do not see training as important?*
- (i) The Authority’s Local Resolution Process (LRP)(Cllr v Cllr) is capable of being used by Councillors. In the event of a dispute would you look to use the process? Do you consider the lack of referrals to the LRP demonstrates that councillors are behaving within the Code?*

Financial Impacts:

- 6. No implications.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

- 7. An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

- 8. No implications

Workforce Impacts:

- 9. No implications

Legal Impacts:

- 10. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Consultation:

11. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

Recommendations:

12. That Members discuss code of conduct related matters with the elected members in attendance at the Standards Committee at this meeting.

Appendices:

13. None

List of Background Papers:

14. None

Officer Contact:

Mr Craig Griffiths
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Telephone 01639 763767
Email: c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk