

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7th September 2021

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Town and Community Council Code of Conduct Matters

Purpose of the Report

1. To draw to Members attention the role of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's ("the Council") Standards Committee and to facilitate a discussion between members of the Standards Committee on how the Committee can assist Town and Community Councils in discharging conduct functions..

Background

2. Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new Ethical Framework for Councils. As part of this framework, the Council has a Standards Committee. This Committee is also responsible for standards functions in relation to the Town and Community Councils (and their Members) in the area of the County Borough Council.
3. Another critical part of the Ethical Framework is the Code of Conduct for Members. One of the functions of the Standards Committee is to assist the Council and the Town and Community Councils in securing compliance with the Code.
4. Members have been invited to attend Town/Community Council meetings in recent months in order to observe Town/Community Councils and the views of members of the Standards Committee.

5. At the Standards Committee meeting on the 27th January 2021, it was noted that noted that this may take many forms, including making Town/Community Councils and their clerks aware of how they should be applying the code of conduct through leaflets, talks, training and so on.
6. Accordingly, discussions have been ongoing since January 2021 between Council Officers and Town and Community Councils on the level of support that the Monitoring Officer is able to provide and to assist in discharging functions the Monitoring Officer will be providing training direct to newly elected Town and Community Councillors, and refresher training will ultimately be provided to all members via online videos and recorded sessions.
7. It was thought appropriate that for members of the Standards Committee to fully discuss the matter on the ways in which the Standards Committee can engage and assist, it would be helpful for representatives of the Town and Community Clerks to be present at this meeting as invited guests to participate in this discussion so they can explain first hand on some issues they come across, what level of support would be beneficial for them and for members of the Standards Committee to hear direct on the role of the clerk within code of conduct matters. Accordingly, present at the meeting and to participate in this discussion will be Mrs Kathryn Charles (Clerk of Neath Town Council) and Mrs Wendy Thomas (Clerk of Coedffranc' Town Council) to advise on the code of conduct issues they come across..

Financial Impact

8. There are no financial impacts associated with this Report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

9. There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment for this report.

Workforce Impacts

10. There are no workforce impacts associated with this Report

Legal Impacts

11. The Standards Committee is governed by the obligations set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and its composition and running is as set out in the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001.

Consultation

12. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That members note the reports and the discussions held today.

Reason for Report

13. That Members of the Standards Committee are aware of the remit of the Standards Committee and the legislative background in which the Standards Committee operates

Appendices

14. None

List of Background Papers

15. The Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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