



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

11th March 2024

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK -
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES PUBLISHED BY WELSH
GOVERNMENT**

Purpose of the Report:

To inform the Committee of the Welsh Government's published Summary of Consultation Responses following the consultation issued in March 2023 on the Welsh Government's response to the recommendations of the independent review of the ethical standards framework for Wales (the Penn Report, issued in October 2021).

Background:

The Ethical Standards Framework for Wales was established by Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000, to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct by members and officers of relevant authorities in Wales. A 'relevant authority' is a county or county borough council ("a principal council"), a community council, a corporate joint committee, a fire and rescue authority and a National Park authority in Wales.

The Framework consists of ten general principles of conduct for members (derived from Lord Nolan's 'Seven Principles of Public Life'). These are included

in the Conduct of Members (Principles) (Wales) Order 2001. Further, the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008 (“Model Code of Conduct”) provides for a set of enforceable minimum standards for the way in which Members should conduct themselves, both in terms of their official capacity and (in some instances) in their personal capacity. It also includes provisions relating to the declaration and registration of interests. The Framework has remained largely unchanged, though there have been a number of small amendments to improve the operation of the Framework over the last twenty years.

In March 2021, the Welsh Government commissioned an independent review of the ethical standards framework for Wales to assess whether the Framework remains fit for purpose. The review was undertaken between April and July 2021 and took into account the new legislative requirements introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, as well as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Equality Act 2010.

The final report on the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales (‘the Independent Review Report’) was published on 14th October 2021, and was considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 11th January 2022.

In March 2023, the Welsh Government published a consultation on its response to the recommendations of the Independent Review Report.

The consultation was considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 11th April 2023 and a consultation response was approved and duly submitted. A copy of the consultation response submitted on behalf of the Committee is attached as Appendix A.

On 14 November 2023, the Welsh Government published a summary of the consultation responses submitted during the consultation on its response to the recommendations of the Independent Review Report. The Summary of Consultation Responses is attached as Appendix B.

The Committee will note that the Summary of Responses indicates that many other local authorities share the views submitted on behalf of Neath Port Talbot in relation to the issues raised in the specific consultation questions, suggesting there is a broad consensus on these issues across Wales. However, the Welsh Government has not yet published any proposals in relation to these matters.

Any relevant proposals which may be brought forward in due course will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Financial Impacts:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

There are no other direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to note the information set out in the report and Appendix B and make any appropriate comments

Appendices:

Appendix A – Consultation Response by NPT Standards Committee
Appendix B - Summary of Consultation Responses.

List of Background Papers:

None

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