

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23rd April 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL 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.

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.
5. Nevertheless to ensure that the Standards Committee can fully discharge its function in respect of Town/Community Councils, the Monitoring Officer is of the view that it would be wise to obtain some updated conduct related information from each Town/Community Council, which can form the basis of

discussion at the next Standards Committee and also to allow members of the Standards Committee to determine what specific areas they would like to consider as part of their forward work programme.

6. To that extent a questionnaire has been produced which is annexed to this report at Appendix 1 for members of the Standards Committee to consider and a discussion is invited on whether this covers the issues that members of the Standards Committee wish to consider. It would be proposed that this survey be issued electronically in the hope it will be easier for Town/Community Councils to respond and to help collate the information in a more effective manner.

Financial Impact

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

Integrated Impact Assessment

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

Workforce Impacts

9. There are no workforce impacts associated with this Report

Legal Impacts

10. 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

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

Recommendations

12. That Members discuss the findings from their recent observations of the Town/Community Councils and approve the issue of the Code of Conduct questionnaire annexed at Appendix 1 of this report for issue to Town/Community Clerks and a report be brought back to Members at the next Standards Committee

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. Appendix 1 – Draft Questionnaire to Town/Community Councils

List of Background Papers

15. The Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Officer Contact

Mr Craig Griffiths

Head of Legal Services

Telephone 01639 763767

Email: c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
QUESTIONNAIRE TO TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCILS

1	Town/Community Council Name	
2	<p>Have all members received Code of Conduct training?</p> <p>In what format did this training take?</p> <p>If not all members have had training please indicate the number of members who have not and what training opportunities are afforded to them?</p>	
3	What specific Code of Conduct training has been provided to Members in the year 2023-2024 and what has been the take up of such training (if information is available)?	
4	How many complaints concerning Members conduct have been referred to you as Clerk in the year 2023-2024?	
5	How many complaints concerning a breach of the Code of Conduct have been made to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales in respect of your members in the year 2023-2024 that you are aware of?	
6	How many declarations of interest have been made in Council meetings during the year 2023-2024?	
7	How many of your members have sought dispensation to speak upon matters which they have a prejudicial information in the year 2023-2024	
8	Has your Council adopted a training plan for its members as required by the Local Government and elections (Wales) Act 2021	
9	If the Answer to Q.8 is YES, has the training plan been published on your Council's website	
10	If the answer to Q.8 is No, when will the Council be adopting a Training Plan?	
11	If the Answer to Q.8 is YES, does the training plan require members to undertake code of conduct training	