



Report of the Monitoring Officer

Special Standards Committee – 4 December 2020

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

Purpose:	To update the Standards Committee on legislation relating to Standards Committee.
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For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was introduced in 2019 by the Minister for Housing and Local Government to provide a new and reformed legislative framework for many aspects of local government, elections, democracy and performance. The proposed legislation is comprehensive and ranges from extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and proposals relating to a new voting system for local government elections.
- 1.2 The Bill was recently agreed by the Senedd on 18 November.

2. Standards Committee

- 2.1 Part 4 of the Bill relates to Local Authority Executives, Members, Officers and Committees. Clauses 62 to 64 includes provisions around Conduct of Members.
- 2.2 Clause 62 introduces a new duty on political group Leaders in relation to standards of conduct. The ethos behind the new duty is to ensure a culture within a local authority which embraces high standards of conduct with both Leaders and members accepting responsibility for their actions both individually and collectively.

- 2.3 The duty is for political group Leaders to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their political group. In doing so, political group Leaders are expected to cooperate with the Standards Committee. The Committee will no doubt be pleased to see this proposal as it reflects the work the Committee is already doing by interviewing group Leaders to establish their views on conduct of members and ethics and values.
- 2.4 Clause 63 introduces a duty on the Standards Committee to provide an annual report to the authority as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year. The annual report must set out how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year. The report may include recommendations to the Authority about any matter in respect of which the Committee has functions. The Authority must consider each annual report within 3 months beginning with the day the Authority receives the report.
- 2.5 The report must include an assessment on the extent to which Leaders of the political groups have complied with their duties during the financial year.

3. Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 There are no equality and engagement implications associated with this report.

Background papers: Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

Appendices: None