

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Standards Committee – 7 October 2016

ATTENDANCE AT COMMUNITY / TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS BY MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE - PROTOCOL

Purpose:	To provide guidance to Members of the Standards Committee should they attend and observe Community / Town Council meetings.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Protocol be adopted.
Report Author:	Huw Evans
Finance Officer:	Carl Billingsley
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Standards Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2016 resolved that the Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Head of Legal & Democratic Services / Deputy Monitoring Officer draft a document outlining the remit and scope of Members of the Standards Committee attending Community / Town Council meetings as an evidence gathering exercise.
- 1.2 The intention being to observe, monitor and improve ethics and standards linked to the Code of Conduct within Swansea.
- 1.3 The Head of Democratic Services liaised with a number of Welsh Authorities in order to establish how they dealt with such attendance.
- 1.4 A draft protocol outlining the remit and scope of such visits is outlined below.

2. Community / Town Councils

2.1 There are 24 Community / Town Councils within the City and County of Swansea. They are:

Community Councils		
Bishopston	Llangyfelach	Penrice
Clydach	Llanrhidian Higher	Pontlliw & Tircoed
Gowerton	Llanrhidian Lower	Port Eynon
Grovesend	Mawr	Reynoldston
Ilston	Mumbles	Rhossili
Killay	Penllergaer	Three Crosses
Llangennith, Llanmadoc Cheriton	& Pennard	Upper Killay

Town Councils		
Gorseinon	Llwchwr	Pontarddulais

3. Attendance at Community / Town Council Meetings by Members of Standards Committee - Protocol

- 3.1 **Remit.** Members of the Standards Committee may visit Community / Town Councils in order to observe how the meeting was conducted and whether there were any Councillors' Code of Conduct issues.
- 3.2 Attendance by Members of the Standards Committee at such meetings will be in the same capacity as members of the public.
- 3.3 The Standards Committee Members may introduce themselves prior to a Community / Town Council meeting commencing; however they need to make it abundantly clear that their attendance is that of a member of the public.
- 3.4 It is proposed that Members of the Standards Committee agree in advance which Community / Town Council meetings they will be visiting. This is proposed so as to prevent all members turning up to observe the same Community / Town Council.
- 3.5 Members of Standards Committee are also advised not to attend the same Community / Town Council too often so as to ensure that they gain a wider experience of how Community / Town Councils operate.
- 3.6 **Scope.** To feedback to the Standards Committee, members' observations of Community / Town Council meetings. Members of Standards Committee should take care not to participate in any meetings which they observe. As members of the Standards Committee their attendance is only to observe meetings and therefore **no** Co-opted Member Payment or mileage allowance will be paid.

- 3.7 **Feedback to Standards Committee.** Feedback from visits to Community / Town Council Meetings will be by way of a verbal update and will become a standing agenda item for the Committee however it is unlikely that there will be feedback at each meeting.
- 3.8 Members need to ensure that they do not put themselves inadvertently in a position of conflict in the event that there is a live complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales outstanding or where a complaint may subsequently be made in relation to any Community / Town Council visited.
- 3.9 Any queries in relation to any visit should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer.
- 3.10 Members of the Standards Committee are reminded that they themselves are also subject the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct equality or engagement implications associated with this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no different financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

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

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.