

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MON / ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE:	Standards Committee
DATE:	18 June 2024
TITLE OF THE REPORT:	Review by the Standards Committee of the Registers of Interests of elected members of the County Council
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	To provide feedback on the findings made during this exercise
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its work programme for 2023-2024, the Standards Committee decided to carry out a review of the registers of interests of elected members of the County Council. The purpose of the exercise was to ensure compliance with the [Council's Code of Conduct for Members](#) and to provide feedback, which would include lessons to be learned for the benefit of members in general.
- 1.2 The exercise has now been completed and the Committee has taken steps to act on the findings made during this review. A summary of the work undertaken is provided in this report.

2. THE PROCESS FOLLOWED

- 2.1 On 27 October 2023, the Standards Committee sent correspondence to all elected members of the County Council advising them of the Committee's intention to carry out a review and encouraging them to check the contents of their Registers. The Chair of the Standards Committee met with Group Leaders in the same month to inform them of the Committee's intentions. Further correspondence was sent to all members in December 2023, following the formal meeting of the Standards Committee, in order to confirm the process the Committee intended to follow when carrying out the review.
- 2.2 The proposed process, and how the sample that would be the subject of the review would be selected, was discussed at an informal meeting of the Standards Committee on 15 November 2023. The arrangements were confirmed at the Committee's formal meeting in December 2023.
- 2.3 The reviews were completed by the 5 independent members of the Committee in January 2024. The reviews were carried out as individual exercises i.e. with each

independent member of the Standards Committee completing the review independently, and as a desktop exercise.

2.4 The sample:

2.4.1 It was decided that the sample would include 20 elected members with each independent member of the Committee reviewing the details of 4 members of the County Council. The sample was selected on the basis of political balance, with the Registers of the four Group Leaders being reviewed, and the rest of the members from each Group being selected at random.

2.5 The process:

2.5.1 All independent members followed the Advice Note approved by the Committee at its meeting in December 2023 when completing their reviews, in order to ensure consistency.

2.5.2 The review was completed between 3 and 17 January 2024 with each independent member providing written feedback of their findings.

2.5.3 The information gathered was agreed and the themes and lessons to be learned were discussed at an informal meeting of the independent members of the Standards Committee on 1 February 2024.

2.6 Findings:

The actions that would result from the exercise were decided as follows:

2.6.1 Send personal correspondence to those members who were the subject of a review and where the specific reviewer considered that the member needed to review / update / explain some of the information published within their Register of Interests (the Standing Register) and/or the Register of Declarations in Meetings. The intention in doing this was to offer information to the member to assist them in ensuring that they meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct regarding the registration of interests. These emails were sent to the members concerned on 29 and 30 April 2024 with a request for a response. Further correspondence was sent on 21 May to those members who did not respond to the first correspondence. The Standards Committee member will consider raising the issue with the member's Group Leader should no response be received from the member.

2.6.2 In cases where the Standards Committee was concerned about a member's wellbeing, for example if there was a change in attendance patterns, correspondence was sent by the independent member of the Standards Committee who was responsible for reviewing that member's Registers to that member's Group Leader. The purpose of this was to ensure that the member is receiving the necessary support to facilitate them to undertake their duties as an elected member. Three letters were sent on 29 April 2023 with a request for a response to the Standards Committee. The relevant Group Leaders are in communication and are cooperating with the Standards Committee regarding these issues.

- 2.6.3 Issues which were considered to be corporate issues, for example technical matters, were found by the independent members when carrying out their reviews. The Committee decided that these matters, which include the process for members completing their Registers and the way in which information is published on the website, amongst other matters, should be raised with the Chief Executive so that they receive attention from the relevant officers. This correspondence was sent on 31 May. A copy of this correspondence has also been shared with the Group Leaders. The Committee's intention is to provide an update for members, through the Group Leaders, regarding the response received and any developments implemented as a result of that letter.
- 2.6.4 It was decided that a general report would be prepared for all members in order to provide feedback on the general themes arising during the exercise, in the hope that it would offer a guide as to what is being considered by the Standards Committee as good practices and those matters that need attention from members. This will also be an opportunity for the Standards Committee to offer its ideas for improvements. This report has been shared by the Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee with the Group Leaders; the intention was for the Vice-Chair to present its content and answer any queries at a meeting of the Group Leaders on 6 June, before it was sent by email to all members. However, that meeting was cancelled, and arrangements will be made for the Standards Committee's Chair or Vice-Chair to attend at a future meeting of the Group Leaders for the same purpose. The general report, which is a summary of the main themes, will be shared with all members after the meeting with the Group Leaders.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Standards Committee considers the process to date and what lessons can be learned when/if the Committee carries out a further review of the Registers of elected members in the future.
- 3.2 That a further report be presented at the formal meeting of the Standards Committee in December 2024 to
- (a) Share a copy of the general report, including the main themes arising from the review process, as sent to all members following an initial discussion with Group Leaders; and
 - (b) report on the developments that have been made, particularly regarding 2.6.3 above.