

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING:	County Council
DATE:	08 May 2014 @ 2pm
TITLE:	Annual Report of the Chair of the Standards Committee
REPORT BY:	Michael Wilson, Chair of the Standards Committee & Co-opted Member of the Council
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To Report on the Activities of the Standards Committee in 2013-14 and to secure Council Approval for the Committee's Programme for 2014-15
CONTACT OFFICER:	Lynn Ball, Head of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer (ext 2568)

Introduction

- (i) The Standards Committee is a statutory committee which comprises of 9 members (2 County Councillors, 5 independent members and 2 community council members).
- (ii) The current Committee is appointed for a period of 4 years until 17th December 2015.
- (iii) The Standards Committee has the following roles and functions (amongst others):-
 - (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors;
 - (b) assisting councillors to observe the Members Code of Conduct;
 - (c) advising, training or arranging to train councillors;
 - (d) granting dispensations;
 - (e) dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on a report referred to her by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- (iv) A copy of the full Constitution of the Standards Committee is available from the Monitoring Officer on request.

General Remarks

1. At its meeting on the 23rd May 2013 the County Council resolved to approve the Standards Committee's Programme for 2013/14. The original Programme identified proposed areas of work, timetable and resources. This document is reproduced at **ENCLOSURE A** to this Report and has been updated to include the work which has since been delivered against the agreed objectives.

2. The Auditor General published a Report in July 2009 which, among other issues, recommended that the Standards Committee take on a more active role in raising the standard of Member conduct, rather than confining itself to the delivery of strict statutory requirements. Effectively, more prevention and less cure.
3. To achieve this objective, the current Programme and its recent predecessors, were designed to support the Council in delivering its recovery, with an emphasis on self-regulation through Member development and on the Standards Committee providing advice / guidance to resolve disputes, where possible and where appropriate, within the Council rather than through external regulators.
4. The most important element in achieving this objective was the establishment of a comprehensive Annual Member Development Plan, specifically tailored to meet the needs of the Council and its Members. Instrumental in this was the Member Development Working Group (MDWG), which included Members, Officers and representation from the Standards Committee. In addition, the MDWG reported its progress and outcomes to the Standards Committee every quarter.
5. The MDWG was also responsible for achieving Member Charter status which was well supported and continues under the auspices of the Democratic Services Committee. The Council has now been presented with the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development Status by the Welsh Local Government Association. The charter provides a broad framework for local planning, self-assessment, action and review as well as opportunities for comparison amongst authorities and sharing good practice. We would like to thank Huw Jones (Interim Head of Democratic Services) and Miriam Williams (Senior HR Development Officer) for their tremendous work in assisting the Council to achieve the charter status.

Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman would like to thank the Committee members for their ongoing hardwork and commitment during the year.

The Standards' Committee's role this year has been primarily focused on strategic thinking on improving standards, and knowledge sharing with councillors and community councils. Much less time has been spent by the committee on conducting hearings arising from alleged breach of code of conduct issues, and attending meetings/mediation resulting from failed standards within the council than in previous years. I see this as an extremely positive thing. In the two and a half years that we have been working on the Standards' Committee, we have all witnessed a huge improvement in standards within the council which has naturally lead to a reduction in conduct issues and complaints being raised. I would like to thank all officers and councillors for their hard work and dedication in continuing to maintain high standards within the council following on from the intervention, and long may this continue.

Our main focus of work this year will be to maintain standards within the council, and to help community councils improve their standards as well. We hope to provide further training this year for community councils.

The Committee looks forward to continuing with its work of supporting Members in reviewing and raising standards in 2014/2015.

RECOMMENDATION:-

1. To note the Programme delivered by the Standards Committee between April 2013 and May 2014 **ENCLOSURE A.**
2. To endorse the Standards Committee's Programme for 2014/15 as outlined in **ENCLOSURE B.**

ENCLOSURE A

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – May 2013 to April 2014

		TIMETABLE	RESOURCES	STATUS AS AT YEAR END
1.	To conduct hearings into alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct following a referral from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)	As and when referrals are made and in accordance with the performance indicator	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	06/12/2013 Standards Committee considered a report by the Ombudsman requesting a local view.
2.	To conduct hearings into applications for Dispensations made by County Councillors and Town/Community Councillors	As and when referrals are made and in accordance with the performance indicator	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	04/09/2013 Dispensation panel of the Standards Committee. One application granted.
3.	To undertake an advisory role in connection with any matters arising under the Council's Local Resolution Protocol, or its successor in the event that a national model is developed	As an when requested	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	No action required
4.	To oversee training and development on the Members' Code of Conduct in accordance with paragraph 2.4(e) of the Code; to include training and development for Town and Community Councils.			Training provided to Town and Community Councils during September 2013 with a 43.5% attendance rate. Further training for Autumn 2014 currently being arranged. Member training on the ethical

				framework 15/05/2013.
5.	To supervise the two Registers of Members' Interests by annual reviews followed by any necessary advice and guidance.	By the end of April 2013	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	Annual review of registers took place in February 2014 by the Standards Committee. Findings discussed in meeting 12/03/2014. General results from review circulated to all members 17/04/2014.
6.	To supervise the register of Gifts and Hospitality by annual reviews followed by any necessary advice and guidance	By the end of April 2013	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	Review discovered that information was still not available on-line. This has now been rectified.
7.	To undertake the role of consultee on any proposed change to the Constitution relevant to the role of the Standards Committee and especially where such proposed changes might disproportionately prejudice the rights and interests of any minority group.	As and when required		The following changes to the Constitution were considered by the Committee 12/06/2013:- (i) Social Media Protocol (ii) Planning Procedure Rules (iii) Self-Regulation Protocol (iv) New DBS Policy
8.	To undertake the role of consultee on any proposed legislative/policy changes relevant to the Standards Committee's area of responsibility.	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer	Draft IRP supplementary report considered under consultation 12/09/2013 and 12/12/2013 ongoing consideration of Complaints Management Project - Audit Review (12/12/2013)
9.	To make any recommendations to the Council for improvements in those areas of work which relate to the Standards Committee.			Recommendation for Committee to have agreed job descriptions and be put through a performance review process was agreed (12/03/2014)

				Consideration throughout the year of webcasting and remote attendance.
10.	The Chair of the Standards Committee to present an annual report to the Council outlining the work of the committee during the previous year.			8 th May 2014
11.	To ensure that the knowledge and skills of the Standards Committee are developed and updated by:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regular reviews of decided cases from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o other relevant authorities o Adjudication Panel for Wales - to participate and contribute on the North Wales Standards Committee Forum - to participate and contribute to the All Wales Standards Committee Conference 			Review published decisions – all Standards Committees and Adjudication Panel for Wales on :- 12/06/2013 12/09/2013 12/12/2013 12/03/2014 North Wales Standards Committee Forum:- 20/05/2013 21/10/2013 29/04/2014
12.	To monitor progress on Member complaints filed with the PSOW and to undertake an annual analysis of complaints data in relation to Ynys Mon County Council in order to identify trends/issues of concern/training needs.			Ongoing discussion in all meetings of Standards Committee.
13.	To maintain contact with Group Leaders, through regular informal meetings, in order to discuss issues of concern/common interest.			Chairman met with Group Leaders on three separate occasions.
14.	Report quarterly performance indicators 1. Relationship between Members and Political Groups.			Ongoing 12/06/2013 12/09/2013 12/12/2013

	2. The effectiveness of the Council's Standards Committee 3. 3. Standards of conduct and behaviour of Members			12/03/2014
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ENCLOSURE B

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – MAY 2014 TO APRIL 2015

		TIMETABLE	RESOURCES	STATUS AS AT YEAR END
1.	To conduct hearings into alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct following a referral from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)	As and when referrals are made and in accordance with the performance indicator	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
2.	To conduct hearings into applications for Dispensations made by County Councillors and Town/Community Councillors	As and when referrals are made and in accordance with the performance indicator	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
3.	To undertake an advisory role in connection with any matters arising under the Council's Local Resolution Protocol, or its successor in the event that a national model is developed	As an when requested	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
4.	To oversee training and development on the Members' Code of Conduct in accordance with paragraph 2.4(e) of the Code; to include training and development for Town and Community Councils.		Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	

5.	To supervise the two Registers of Members' Interests by annual reviews followed by any necessary advice and guidance.	By the end of April 2015	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
6.	To supervise the register of Gifts and Hospitality by annual reviews followed by any necessary advice and guidance	By the end of April 2015	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
7.	To undertake the role of consultee on any proposed change to the Constitution relevant to the role of the Standards Committee and especially where such proposed changes might disproportionately prejudice the rights and interests of any minority group.	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
8.	To undertake the role of consultee on any proposed legislative/policy changes relevant to the Standards Committee's area of responsibility.	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
9.	To make any recommendations to the Council for improvements in those areas of work which relate to the Standards Committee.	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
10.	The Chair of the Standards Committee to present an annual report to the Council outlining the work of the committee during the previous year.	May 2015	Chair	
11.	To ensure that the knowledge and skills of the Standards Committee are developed and updated by:- - regular reviews of decided cases from	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o other relevant authorities o Adjudication Panel for Wales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to participate and contribute on the North Wales Standards Committee Forum - to participate and contribute to the All Wales Standards Committee Conference. - To be reviewed under a performance review scheme similar to that used by the elected members. 			
12.	To monitor progress on Member complaints filed with the PSOW and to undertake an annual analysis of complaints data in relation to Ynys Mon County Council in order to identify trends/issues of concern/training needs.	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
13.	To maintain contact with Group Leaders, through regular informal meetings, in order to discuss issues of concern/common interest.	As and when required		
14.	Report quarterly performance indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Relationship between Members and Political Groups. 5. The effectiveness of the Council's Standards Committee 6. 3. Standards of conduct and behaviour of Members 	As and when required	Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	
15.	Miscellaneous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To suggest that elected members should attend training which is relevant to the committees which they sit on, and their specific roles. 		Monitoring Officer Solicitor to Monitoring Officer	

