

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 5 March 2018
Report Subject	Visits to Town and Community Councils
Report Author	Chief Officer Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the January committee officers wrote to all town and community councillors informing them that independent members intended to visit their meetings and seeking feedback. Only one council responded and it welcomed the initiative.

If members wish to conduct such visits then the following simple guidelines are suggested for how they are conducted for the sake of courtesy and transparency:

- 1) that there should be a published rota
- 2) that each council should be told specifically who will attend
- 3) that each attendee introduces themselves to the clerk when they arrive at the meeting and then takes a seat in the public gallery
- 4) that the attendee should not speak at the meeting unless invited to do so, and should only explain the nature and purpose of the programme of visits
- 5) that the attendee should decline to give specific advice on matters under the code such as declaring interests, and should refer any such requests to the clerk, monitoring officer or deputy monitoring officer instead

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee agrees a rota of visits and the guidelines for how they should be undertaken.
---	--

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Number of complaints
1.01	<p>At its January meeting the committee discussed the possibility of independent members visiting town and community councils within the county. It resolved</p> <p>“That the Monitoring Officer write to town and community councils to seek views on (i) a consistent approach for the visits and (ii) reasons for the lack of attendance at training sessions. The responses to be reported back to a future meeting.”</p> <p>Despite sending a reminder only one Town Council responded. It welcomed the proposed initiative. However, it is clearly difficult to know whether the general lack of response indicates broad support or not.</p>
1.02	<p>Clearly the committee has two choices. To send a further reminder or to go ahead. As the proposal is within the remit of the committee, and such meetings should be open to the public in any event, it is recommended that the proposal proceeds.</p>
1.03	<p>If members wish to conduct such visits then the following simple guidelines are suggested for how they are conducted for the sake of both courtesy and transparency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) that there should be a published rota2) that each council should be told specifically who will attend3) that each attendee introduces themselves to the clerk when they arrive at the meeting and then takes a seat in the public gallery4) that the attendee should not speak at the meeting unless invited to do so, and should only explain the nature and purpose of the programme of visits5) that the attendee should decline to give specific advice on matters under the code such as declaring interests, and should refer any such requests to the clerk, monitoring officer or deputy monitoring officer instead
1.04	<p>If members choose to proceed then officers will contact them to draw up a rota based on the schedule of meeting dates for town and community councils.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Preparing a rota can be achieved within available resources.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>All Town and Community Councils were asked to comment on the proposal that such visits would be carried out.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None