

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 30 September 2019
Report Subject	Feedback from the Independent Members' Visits to Town and Community Councils.
Report Author	Matthew Georgiou

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Independent Members of the Committee have attended meetings of all but one Town and Community Council in Flintshire over the past 12 months. The visits have been carried out in order to gain a greater understanding of how Town and Community Council meetings are run across the County, with a particular focus on issues pertaining to the Members' Code of Conduct (the Code), and to provide any feedback arising from the visits that may be useful.

The overriding feedback is that Town and Community Council meetings in Flintshire are well organised and attended and that Town and Community Councillors and their clerks should be commended for their hard work and commitment in this respect.

Letters have been sent to Town and Community Councils following each report back to the Committee by Independent Members of the Committee, and this report is intended to summarise the common themes arising from the visits and to endorse them as recommendations to Town and Community Councils in Flintshire as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That this report is circulated to all Town and Community Councils in Flintshire and the common themes and suggestions at paragraph 1.03 of this report are endorsed as recommendations of best practice to those Councils.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	<p>The Independent Members of the Committee have attended meetings of all but one Town and Community Council in Flintshire over the past 12 months. These visits have been undertaken in order that Members gain a good understanding of how Town and Community Council meetings are organised and carried out across Flintshire, with a particular focus on any issues arising pertaining to the Code. Written feedback has been provided to Town and Community Council clerks (copies of these letters are appended to this report). The main message that has emerged is that meetings are generally very well attended by Town and Community Councillors, local issues appear to be thoroughly debated and considered, and that Councillors and their clerks should be commended for their hard work and commitment.</p>
1.02	<p>There have, however, been some common themes that have arisen where Members of the Committee consider improvements should be made to meetings of Town and Community Councils in Flintshire. The feedback letters referred to at paragraph 1.01 of this report have advised Town and Community Councils of these matters, and the key matters are summarised at paragraph 1.03 below.</p>
1.03	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Declarations of Interest should appear as a standing item on all agendas before substantive items are listed;2. Where Declarations of Interest are made by Councillors, Members should both verbally express whether the interest is personal, or both personal and prejudicial, and should also briefly explain the nature of the interest including which item on the agenda it relates to and should submit the same in writing before the end of the meeting;3. Agendas should be available prior to meetings on the Council's website and minutes of meetings should also be published on the Council's website;4. In order to promote accessibility, the location, date and time of meetings should be available on the Council's website and adequate signposting at and around the venue itself should be in place;5. Name plates should be displayed for Councillors at meetings so Members of the public know who the Members of the Council are;6. Inductions should be arranged for all new Councillors, including an explanation of the expectations upon them under the Code;7. That the matters required under the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 are published on Town and Community Council websites as follows:

	<p>(a) information on how to contact it and, if different, its clerk including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a telephone number; (ii) a postal address; (iii) an email address; <p>(b) information about each of its Members, including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Member's name; (ii) how the Member may be contacted; (iii) the Member's party affiliation (if any); (iv) the ward which the Member represents (where relevant); (v) any office of the Council held by the Member; (vi) any committee of the Council to which the Member belongs; <p>(c) the minutes of the proceedings of the Council's meetings and (in so far as is reasonably practicable) any documents which are referred to in the minutes;</p> <p>(d) any audited statement of the Council's accounts.</p> <p>(e) the register of Members' interests.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	N/A

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Town and Community Council clerks throughout Flintshire were consulted about the visits prior to them commencing and were provided with written feedback and the matters reported back to the Committee.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The recommendations within the report should reduce the risk of complaints about breaches of the Code and should improve the publics' experience of Town and Community Council meetings.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Letters of feedback on visits sent to Town and Community Councils in Flintshire

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Matthew Georgiou, Deputy Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01352 702330 E-mail: matthew_georgiou@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	N/A