

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 4 th September 2023
Report Subject	Agenda items for the next Ethical Liaison Meeting
Report Author	Chief Officer Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommends that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee meet periodically with senior members of the Council to discuss ethical issues. The next such meeting will take place on 6 October and will include the Chair and Leader of Council plus the Group Leaders.

For the next meeting it is suggested that the topics of discussion should be a quick review of the process for preparing the annual report and the main focus being on training sessions requested by group leaders as part of their duty to promote ethical behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the draft agenda for the next Ethical Liaison Meeting be agreed.
2	That the final agenda be agreed by the Chief Officer Governance in consultation with the parties to the meeting.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE ETHICAL LIAISON MEETING
1.01	The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommends that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee should meet periodically with senior members of the Council to discuss topical ethical issues.

1.02	The committee has published its first annual report including an assessment of the compliance by group leaders with the duty to promote ethical behaviour. I asked for feedback on this process by email and it would be worth briefly discussing that feedback at the meeting.
1.03	As part of the assessment process group leaders requested training. It would be helpful to discuss with group leaders the extent and content of a training programme for councillors to ensure that it meets their expectations.
1.04	<p>Training for how to ensure respectful communication on social media was specifically requested for all councillors and that should, as discussed previously, be broadened to all communication whatever the medium. In addition it may be worth including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is permitted under freedom of political expression, 2) A reminder about the different roles of councillors and officers, 3) Support for group leaders on how to address issues within their group including alternative ways to encourage ethical behaviour 4) The Ombudsman's 2 stage test for enforcement action,

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None directly arising from this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The Chair and Leader of Council plus the Group Leaders will be consulted on the proposed agenda.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The training should reduce the risk of councillors offending other people and should help group leaders to redirect behaviour that might lead to a complaint under the councillors' code of conduct.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

	Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None