

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 5 July 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Planning the Agenda for the Liaison on Ethical Issues Meeting
<b>Report Author</b>	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 needs to be arranged and will include the Chair and Leader of Council plus the Group Leaders.

So that the meeting is productive it is suggested that the committee should propose a draft agenda. A key issue on the horizon is the new legislative duty on Group Leaders to promote and maintain high standards by members of the group. Agreeing how this will be interpreted and applied within the Council should provide for a full and productive discussion.

### 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

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining the Ethical Liaison Meeting</b>
1.01	<p>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 ethical issues. One such meeting has taken place and it was agreed that the next meeting should</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) include the political group leaders; and</li><li>2) take place after the Independent Members had completed their visits to Council meetings.</li></ol> <p>Further meetings were delayed by the response to the pandemic but it is now appropriate to arrange the second meeting.</p>
1.02	<p>For the meeting to be focussed and productive it is suggested that the Committee propose an agenda covering pertinent topics. Clearly the outcome of the Independent Member visits to Council meetings will be one such topic. The final report on such visits is an earlier item on the agenda and so can be included.</p>
1.03	<p>Another forthcoming issue that would be helpful to discuss with Group Leaders is how the Council will apply the new duty on them under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The duty is as follows:</p> <p>“(1) A leader of a political group ...—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group, and</li><li>(b) must co-operate with the council's standards committee ... in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.</li></ol> <p>(2) In complying with subsection (1), a leader of a political group must have regard to any guidance about the functions under that subsection issued by the Welsh Ministers.”</p>
1.04	<p>The duty does not come into force until May 2022 and, as yet, Welsh Government has not drafted any guidance on the duty. WLGA has consulted Councils and has prepared a list of the key issues to be submitted to Welsh Government for its consideration when drafting the guidance. As the document is still draft I have attached it as an exempt document. Should the committee wish to discuss the contents of the note itself then it will need to resolve to exclude the press and public.</p>
1.05	<p>Along with a general introductions and an explanation of the nature of the meeting, these 2 items should generate sufficient productive discussion for one meeting. As a matter of courtesy the other participants in the meeting should be consulted on the draft agenda and the final version will be drawn up in consultation with them.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None directly arising from this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The Chair and Leader of Council plus the group leaders will be consulted on the proposed agenda.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Report authors to list key risks and mitigation measures.  Risk paragraph to include anti-poverty, environment and equalities issues.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – notes from WLGA regarding proposed duty on group leaders (note this Appendix is an exempt document and is not to be shared with the press or public)

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	No background papers  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702344 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk">Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>WLGA:</b> The Welsh Local Government Association, a body that represents all local authorities in Wales. It often acts as a single voice for councils in their dealings with Welsh Government.