

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 6 September 2021
Report Subject	Pan Wales Standards Conference
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every 2 years the monitoring officers in Wales deliver a standards conference for all Standards Committees in order to share good practice and deliver training. It is arranged regionally and the next conference is to be arranged by the North Wales region.

The review of the Ethical Standards Framework, which is currently underway (see earlier report), is of such importance that it will form the basis for all/most discussion at the conference. This year's conference will be the first to be held virtually, due to the uncertainty over what COVID restrictions might be in place at the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the preparations for the conference and submits any ideas for useful topics of discussion.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CONFERENCE
1.01	The Monitoring Officers in Wales organise a biennial Standards Conference on a regional basis. The last such conference was held in 2018 at Aberystwyth, organised by the Mid Wales region. The conference due to be held in 2020 was to have been organised by the North Wales region. It was postponed due to the pandemic and will take place later this year instead.

1.02	The review of the Ethical Standards Framework (see earlier report) is of such significance that it will inevitably form the basis for the majority/whole of the conference. Whilst the report may make findings that require legislation to be implemented there will also be findings based on good practice, training and changes in behaviour that will need to be digested and considered.
1.03	The precise timing of the conference will be driven by the publication of the report and response from Welsh Government. Richard Penn and the relevant Welsh Government officials have agreed to attend the event. One Voice Wales and the Ombudsman will also be invited to attend to discuss the report and implications of its findings.
1.04	The precise format for the conference is still to be finalised. However it is likely to take the form of presentations from Richard Penn and Welsh Government followed by panel discussion with invited guests such as the Ombudsman and One Voice Wales. There will be scope for questions/answers plus debate by delegates.
1.05	In previous years the conference has been a physical event with delegates travelling from across Wales to attend. The number of delegates able to attend has been determined by the size of the available venue, and has previously been restricted to 3 or so per Council. This year's event will be virtual to reflect ongoing uncertainty over COVID alert levels and possible restrictions. The virtual format will however make it possible for many more delegates to attend and so all Committee members will be able to attend if desired.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The conference is being arranged within existing resources. Holding the conference virtually will reduce the cost of venue hire, attendance, travel etc.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The holding of conferences such as this increase the understanding and skills of delegates and thus of Standards Committees across Wales. They help to develop thinking on current ethical issues. They represent a form of risk reduction by promoting good practice.

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

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.