

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 26 September 2023
Report Subject	Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2022/2023
Report Author	Chief Officer Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 imposed an obligation on the Standards Committee to publish an annual report, and to have regard to statutory guidance as to the contents of such reports.

The first such report is attached for consideration by Council. It contains two recommendations which have either been actioned or which are in hand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council thanks the Standards Committee for its first report and accepts the recommendations.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REQUIREMENT TO PRODUCE AN ANNUAL REPORT
1.01	Section 63 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires every Standards Committee to produce an annual report for each financial year as soon as reasonably practical after the end of the year to which it relates.
1.02	Such reports must: (1) Describe how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

	<p>(2) In particular, the report must include a summary of—</p> <p>(a) what has been done to discharge the general and specific functions conferred on the Committee [to promote and maintain high standards conduct by the Members and co-opted Members of the authority and Town and Community Councils, and to assist Members and co-opted Members of the authority to observe the authority’s Code of Conduct];</p> <p>(b) reports and recommendations made or referred to the Committee [by the Ombudsman]; and</p> <p>(c) action taken by the Committee following its consideration of such reports and recommendations</p> <p>(d) notices given to the Committee [by the Adjudication Panel for Wales following a hearing];</p> <p>(3) An annual report by a standards Committee of a County Council or County Borough Council in Wales must include the Committee’s assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their duties under section 52A(1) during the financial year [duty to promote ethical behaviour by members of their group].</p>
1.03	<p>The Committee may also make recommendations to the authority about any matter in respect of which the Committee has functions. The Committee made two such recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The group leaders and councillors are offered training on respectful communication. The scope of such training is due to be discussed with Group Leaders at the Ethical Liaison Meeting planned for 6th October; and 2) Town and community council clerks are reminded of the ability to seek dispensation and of the process for doing so. This has been done.
1.04	The report is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	The report was produced in house within the resources available to the Committee.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	The Standards Committee consulted group leaders to assess their compliance with the duty to promote ethical compliance.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	The recommendations made by the Committee will help to reduce the risk of inappropriate or unethical behaviour that might amount to a breach of the councillors' code of conduct.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – annual report

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	Ethical Liaison Meeting – regular meetings between members of the Standards Committee and senior councillors to discuss standards of behaviour within the council.