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Bridgend County Borough Council

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Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Dydd Llun, 14 Gorffennaf 2025

Annwyl Cyngorydd,

PWYLLGOR SAFONNAU

Cynhelir Cyfarfod Pwyllgor Safonau o bell trwy Trwy Timau Microsoft ar **Dydd Mawrth, 22 Gorffennaf 2025 am 10:00.**

AGENDA

1 Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb gan Aelodau.

2 Datganiadau o fuddiant

Derbyn datganiadau o ddiddordeb personol a rhagfarnol (os o gwbl) gan Aelodau / Swyddogion yn unol â darpariaethau'r Cod Ymddygiad Aelodau a fabwysiadwyd gan y Cyngor o 1 Medi 2008.

3 Safonau Ymddygiad

3 - 14

4 Adroddiad Blynyddol

15 - 22

5 Penodiadau i'r Pwyllgor Safonau

23 - 26

6 Materion Brys

I ystyried unrhyw eitemau o fusnes y, oherwydd amgylchiadau arbennig y cadeirydd o'r farn y dylid eu hystyried yn y cyfarfod fel mater o frys yn unol â Rhan 4 (pharagraff 4) o'r Rheolau Trefn y Cyngor yn y Cyfansoddiad.

Nodyn: Cyfarfod o bell fydd hwn a bydd Aelodau a Swyddogion yn mynychu o bell trwy Trwy Timau Microsoft. Bydd y cyfarfod cael ei recordio i'w drosglwyddo drwy wefan y Cyngor. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiwn am hyn, cysylltwch â cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159

Yn ddiffuant

K Watson

Prif Swyddog, Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddio, AD a Pholisi Corfforaethol

Dosbarthiad:

Cynghorwr:

P Baker

R Lynch

S Maughan

RL Penhale-Thomas

JC Spanswick

G Thomas

Vacancy

Vacancy

G Walter

AJ Williams

MJ Williams

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	22 JULY 2025
Report Title:	STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	To receive reports from the political Group Leaders in the Council outlining their compliance with their duties in relation to high standards of conduct.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Standards Committee the reports of the three political Group Leaders of the Council outlining their compliance with their duties in relation to high standards of conduct.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 30 September 2022 the Committee received a report on the new duties placed upon Standards Committees and political Group Leaders under the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021.
- 2.2 A new duty under the Act is placed on the leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 a political group is constituted where the Proper Officer is notified of two or more members who wish to be treated as a political group, the name of the group and the name of the one member of the group who is to act as its leader. The Proper Officer has been informed of the following political groups and leaders:
- Labour – Group Leader: Cllr John Spanswick, Leader of the Council
 - Bridgend County Independents – Group Leader: Cllr Amanda Williams
 - Democratic Alliance Group – Group Leader: Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
- 2.3 The duty recognises those in positions of leadership and influence within a principal council should have responsibility for combating bullying and harassment amongst elected members and council staff and must act as a positive role model. Among other things, this duty is designed to support Welsh Government's diversity in

democracy agenda and actions in its Race Equality Action Plan. The 2021 Act also requires that a leader of a political group, must co-operate with the Standards Committee in the exercise of the Committee's functions.

- 2.4 Standards Committees play an important role in supporting members, individually and collectively, to develop and maintain a culture which embraces high standards of conduct. The 2021 Act also extends the specific functions of a Standards Committee to include monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups with the new duty imposed on them by the Act to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Group Leaders are required to report compliance with their duty to the Standards Committee. This could take the form of a short letter or report at a frequency agreed by the political Group Leaders in the Council and its Standards Committee. Group Leaders should also report any serious concerns about members' behaviour which has not been remedied by informal actions, in line with the requirement in the Code for councillors to report breaches. The Council's political Group Leaders and the Standards Committee have previously agreed on the form and frequency of a report from each Group Leader to the Committee.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee now consider each report submitted by the Group Leaders (attached as **Appendices 1-3**) and provide feedback. The Group Leaders have been invited to attend the Committee meeting on 22 July 2025. The Chair may also wish to meet with Group Leaders privately and periodically to review behaviour.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change and nature implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the reports attached as Appendices 1-3 and provide feedback.

Background documents:

None

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Appendix 1

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>			
Report by:	Cllr John Spanswick		
Political Group:	Labour Group		
No. of members:	26	No. trained on Code:	100%
For the period:	May 2024 – June 2025		
<u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u>			
	Informal	Local Resolution	PSOW
Public			
Officers			
Councillors			
<u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee; 			
<p>All members of my group have attended the Code of Conduct training and work is ongoing to ensure all have completed the online mandatory training modules. I have encouraged members to take up training in relation to committees they may not currently sit on but may be required to in the future. This recently proved to be of benefit when there was a vacancy on the Development Control committee and we had a member who had undertaken the relevant training beforehand and could participate without any delay in waiting for the mandatory training.</p> <p>My Deputy has regular One2One meetings with each non-executive member of my Group to discuss their roles and help identify future training needs to help with their personal development plan. As Group Leader I undertake regular One2One session with all my</p>			

<p>cabinet members to develop their training plan and to agree a performance framework around their portfolio.</p> <p>Where appropriate Group members are encouraged to attend external training that may be suitable such as that provided by the WLGA and also APSE.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings; - promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution; - promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity; - attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
<p>We have regular monthly Group meetings and at the start of every agenda we have introduced a standing item on the subject of 'Member Conduct and Confidentiality'. There is a Group Whip system whereby any issues can be raised confidentially with support and guidance offered as appropriate.</p> <p>Unfortunately, there continues to be occasions where my Group as the Labour administration are the subject of negative comments on social media and more recently this has been targeted at myself as Leader. While I accept there should be healthy challenge this has tended to be from individuals linked to the main opposition group and I have recently raised this with the Group Leader (Cllr.A. Williams) and hope to see this addressed moving forward.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards; - work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.
<p>I have an open-door policy for all members and in particular Group Leaders and continue to arrange monthly Group Leaders meetings. Previous recommendation from the Standards Committee in relation to having a regular item at Group meetings on Standards and Code of Conduct has been implemented. Should there be any future recommendation from the Standards Committee then I will endeavour to ensure that they are complied with in full.</p>

Appendix 2

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>			
Report by:	Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas		
Political Group:	Democratic Alliance		
No. of members:	8	No. trained on Code:	100%
For the period:	July 2024 – June 2025		
<u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u>			
	Informal	Local Resolution	PSOW
Public	0	0	0
Officers	0	0	0
Councillors	1	0	0
<u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance</u> <u>(To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards; • encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards; • ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee; 			
<p>I continue to espouse the Nolan Principles of public life and adhere to the code of conduct, and expect the same of members of my group. I regularly support them in informal queries they may have regards the workings of council or to resolve any issues.</p> <p>I took the opportunity to reshuffle my members around different committees in order that they can develop a broader understanding of council services. Where training for specific committees is required following the AGM in May, members are aware and will attend sessions to enable them to carry out their duties – some sessions are planned in the coming weeks,</p> <p>Members of my group also attended a session held earlier in the year – arranged by officers with an external provider - on improving scrutiny and accountability.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings; 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution; • promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity; • attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
<p>No members of my group have been the subject of any complaints that are formal or requiring local resolution, since the beginning of this council term. An informal conversation took place between myself and another GL regarding perceived 'tone' between two members, which wasn't taken further.</p> <p>All are hard-working ward members and invariably contribute to their allocated committees, treating members and officers with respect and civility. I am proud of their attitude to behaviour in public life.</p> <p>I remain ready and willing to work with the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee should any issues arise.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards; • work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.
<p>I regularly attend Group Leaders' meetings and enjoy a constructive relationship with both fellow Leaders.</p> <p>I have – and will continue to – raise issues informally with the Monitoring Officer and at Group Leader meetings when I believe standards of conduct or behaviour have fallen short of what residents would expect, primarily in meetings where a discussion has become 'heated'. I am equally content for fellow GLs to raise issues informally with me, should they concern my members.</p> <p>I am looking forward to the new Chief Executive joining us in due course at regular Group Leader meetings.</p>

Appendix 3

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>			
Report by:	Cllr Amanda Williams		
Political Group:	Bridgend County Independents		
No. of members:	13	No. trained on Code:	13 (100%)
For the period:	11 th July 2024 to 4 th July 2025		
<u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u>			
	Informal	Local Resolution	PSOW
Public			3 (no investigation for any of them)
Officers			
Councillors			
<u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u>			
Include matters such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards; - ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee; 			
<p>I continue to raise training at our group meetings and I encourage all members to attend any training that is offered. Despite assurances that the online training is fit for those with visual problems, I continue to have concerns and I would like officers to sit down with those who have issues to see exactly what the problem is. I have completed all of the online training, but I found it extremely difficult to navigate some pages.</p> <p>All nominees to committees have undertaken the relevant training for that committee.</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings; - promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution; - promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity; - attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
<p>We continue to have a monthly group meeting where we have an open and honest discussion as a group and I continue to have an open-door policy where any member can contact me for advice or to discuss issues as needed.</p> <p>I said in my last report that civility and respect are core and that I strongly believed that this had improved greatly over the previous 12 months. However, I feel that the general behaviour in the council chamber has deteriorated, with a tit for tat culture and a childish banging of tables and applauding. I have discussed this with the leader of the council and the monitoring officer.</p> <p>The increase in fake profiles, targeting independent councillors, that I raised last time have continued to increase with the onslaught of false allegations and vexatious attacks. Unfortunately, the police have taken no action against those who are known, despite clear hate crime such as antisemitism and them describing the contents of my house as they share openly that they have been looking into my window. A number of my group continue to be targeted and there is no support for them. Some councillors are also commenting on these social media posts adding fuel to the fire. I have asked my group not to comment on any such posts. However, I do feel that unless this behaviour is taken seriously, the matter will escalate and there could be harm. As I outlined previously, I have already had my car tyre slashed, had my CCTV cut, had people sharing online that I am home alone with my children and I have even had individuals approaching my youngest child in a community event and making them cry. Councillors are continually told they should have a thick skin, but they should not have to put up with this. This is over and above what is reasonable.</p> <p>Complaints about community councillors are also increasing and those members of my group, who are at a community council level also, have raised that some community councils are extremely toxic. Whilst this is outside of my control, I do have concerns that continued poor behaviour by all in certain councils and failure to adhere to council rules will inevitably affect BCBC. As I have raised before politics is leading to increasingly dirtier tactics and continued attempts to entrap individuals or pressure them into resigning. I recommended in my previous report that the standards committee needs to take a closer look at town and community councils, particularly those with a high number of complaints against those who do this role for either no money or for a very small personal allowance. I am not aware that these councils have had any contact from the standards committee to date.</p> <p>I have continued to have a monthly meeting with the Chief Executive where we can discuss openly and frankly any concerns about behaviour and comments made and also work on building relationships. I have also met several times with the monitoring officer to discuss behaviour and I believe that our working relationship has improved vastly over the past 12 months.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards; - work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.

I am more than happy to implement any recommendations put forward to me. At the last meeting I attended it was suggested that behaviour should be a standing agenda item in group meetings and this is now the case with my group. Apart from general behaviour, I continue to remind my group about process as well as the content of emails.

I continue to have a good relationship with Cllr Ross Thomas and I believe that we work well together. Unfortunately, there have been instances where I have felt bullied by the labour leader, so much so that I felt unable to attend monthly group leader meetings, due to fear of abuse. I have met with the labour group leader last month to talk through these concerns and I explained how I was made to feel in meetings and in the tone of emails and we did agree to draw a line under the matter. I have not attended the two group leader meetings since that agreement as both have been cancelled.

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Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	22 JULY 2025
Report Title:	ANNUAL REPORT
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, the Standards Committee must make an Annual Report to the Council.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Committee to approve its Annual Report for 2024/25 to be reported to Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee must prepare an Annual Report to include:
- a description of how the Committee has discharged its functions;
 - a summary of any reports and recommendations that were referred to the Standards Committee under Chapter 3 of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000;
 - a summary of the actions that the Committee has taken following consideration of the reports and recommendations referred to above;
 - a summary of any notices that were given to the Standards Committee under Chapter 4 of Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2000;
 - the Committee's assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group and to cooperate with the Committee in the exercise of its functions;
 - any recommendations which the Committee considers it appropriate to make to the Council about any matters which falls within the Committee's functions.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Annual Report for the Standards Committee for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the Annual Report for 2024/25 for reporting to Council.

Background documents:

None

Standards Committee Annual Report – 2024/25

Membership

The Standards Committee is made up of Independent Members, one Town and Community Council representative and two County Borough Councillors. These are:

Independent Members:

Sue Maughan (Chair)

Peter Baker

Roy Lynch

Phillip Clarke (term of office expired February 2025)

Borough Councillors:

Cllr Martin Williams

Cllr Graham Walter

Town and Community Council representative:

Cllr Gavin Thomas

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

This is the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the period 1st March 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Committee seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the Council. Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Committee must make an annual report to the Authority describing how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

The Roles of the Standards Committee

The role and functions of the Committee are set out within Section 8 of the Council's Constitution. This covers such matters as:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members
- Monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy
- Considering reports submitted by the Monitoring Officer and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- Granting dispensations in accordance with the Regulations
- Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the Council with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group.

The Standards Committee generally meets quarterly throughout the year.

Recruitment

On 20 July 2022, Council approved that the membership of the Committee be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) be appointed to the Committee. At the time of this Report, there are currently two vacancies on the Committee following the resignation of Mr Shawn Cullen, Independent Member and the term of office ceasing for Mr Phillip Clarke, Independent Member. The Monitoring Officer has been given

approval to commence a new recruitment process for the appointment of two Independent Members to the Committee.

Work of the Committee

The work of the Committee during 2024/25 has continued to centre on the following main areas:

Maintaining high standards

The Council has ensured that Members have been trained to understand:

- Members' Code of Conduct
- Importance of the Register of Member Interests. The declaration of interest forms are published on the Council's website
- The Investigation of Complaints and a local hearing procedure

Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups

The provisions in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 build on this by supporting a culture where members have a responsibility to act in a manner which respects and values all people. A duty under the Act is placed on the leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 a political group is constituted where the Proper Officer is notified of two or more members who wish to be treated as a political group, the name of the group and the name of the one member of the group who is to act as its leader. At the Annual Meeting in May 2024, the Proper Officer was informed in writing of the following political groups and leaders:

- Labour – Group Leader: Cllr John Spanswick, Leader of the Council
- Bridgend County Independents – Leader of Largest Opposition Group: Cllr Amanda Williams
- Democratic Alliance Group – Group Leader: Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas

The three group leaders were invited to the meeting of the Committee on 11 July 2024 to present reports outlining their compliance and support with the new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

Looking ahead, a report will be prepared and submitted to the Committee annually from each individual Group including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and other relevant information. The reports will be shared with the Monitoring Officer prior to being submitted to the Committee and individual Group Leaders will be invited to attend the Committee when their reports are being considered.

Code of Conduct Complaints

The Standards Committee determined on 7 May 2024 that a Former Member of Bridgend Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

4(b) –Members must show respect and consideration for others

6 (1) (a) – The Member must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute.

The Committee resolved that the Former Member should be censured in relation to the above breaches of the Code, which was the maximum sanction available to the Committee, as the Member was no longer an Elected Member. This is in accordance with their powers under s 9(1)(c) of the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Former Member and the PSOW were notified of the Committee's decision by Notice of Determination and the Former Member did not appeal the decision.

The Standards Committee determined on 9 May 2024 that a Member of Bridgend Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

6(1)(a) – Members must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute;

(7a) – Members must not in their official capacity or otherwise, use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for themselves, or any other person, an advantage or create or avoid for themselves, or any other person, a disadvantage;

11(1) - Where Members have a personal interest in any business of their authority and they attend a meeting at which that business is considered, they must disclose orally to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest before or at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent;

14(1)(a) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee withdraw from the room, chamber or place where a meeting considering the business is being held;

14(1)(c) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee not seek to influence a decision about that business;

14(1)(e) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee not make any oral representations (whether in person or some form of electronic communication) in respect of that business or immediately cease to make such oral representations when the prejudicial interest becomes apparent.

The Committee resolved that the Member should receive a sanction of 6 months suspension. This is in accordance with their powers under the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Member was granted permission to appeal the decision of the Committee to the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW). On 5 June 2024, the President of the APW issued a decision which allowed the appeal to proceed on a limited ground of appeal in relation to sanction only. The APW determined on 5 December 2024 to refer the matter back to the Standards Committee with a recommendation that the Member should be suspended for 10 weeks pursuant to the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. On 6 February 2025, the Standards Committee upheld its original decision of a six-month suspension. The decision and reasons for the decision were confirmed in writing to the Member, PSOW and the APW.

The Standards Committee determined on 21 June 2024 that a Member of Porthcawl Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

4(b) – show respect and consideration to others

4(c) – not use bullying behaviour or harass any person

6 (1)(a) – not conduct yourself in a matter which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office into disrepute

6(2) – comply with any request of your authority's Monitoring Officer, or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, in connection with an investigation conducted in accordance with their respective statutory powers.

The Committee resolved that the Member should receive a sanction of 2 months suspension. This is in accordance with their powers under the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Former Member and the PSOW were notified of the Committee's decision by Notice of Determination and the Former Member did not appeal the decision.

There is one ongoing 'live' case which has been issued by the PSOW under Section 69 of the Local Government Act 2000 at the time of this report.

The PSOW received 11 Town and Community Council Code of Conduct Complaints for 2024/25. At the time of this report, a breakdown of those complaints is not available but will be published as part of the PSOW Annual Letter in September.

Local Resolution Process

The Standards Committee notes that the Local Resolution Protocol adopted by the Council continues to provide a helpful process for resolving relatively 'low-level' behavioural complaints made by County Borough Members about other Members, in a timely and proportionate way.

Dispensations

The Standards Committee has statutory power to grant dispensations to Members with a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter, to allow them to participate in a decision regarding that matter, in appropriate circumstances, which are set out in statutory regulations.

No individual dispensations were granted to Members of the Council to allow them to speak and vote on any matter before the Council and / or Committee. However, the general dispensation is always kept under review.

Other Activities

In addition to the above activities the Standards Committee also:

- Received and noted the Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2023-24;
- Received and investigated three s69 reports from the Ombudsman;
- Received and considered the recommendations following the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework (Richard Penn, report author);
- Received a report regarding the Standards Committee Hearing Process;
- Noted update reports following observations of Town and Community Council meetings;
- Received and noted the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Investigation Report into Codes of Conduct Complaints published in September 2024;

- Received reports from the Group Leaders outlining their compliance and support with their new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, much of the work of the Committee is demand led.

- The Committee will identify and support provision of regular training and refresher events for Elected Members of the Council;
- Observation of Council and Committee Meetings – the Standards Committee will continue to observe proceedings at Town and Community Council, Council and Committee meetings to give feedback on observations and inform its work priorities;
- Meetings with Group Leaders - to facilitate ongoing engagement with representatives from all political groups and to identify how the approach code of conduct matters in their political group;
- Code of Conduct, Member Training and Development – the Standards Committee will consider the need for any further training on the Members' Code of Conduct focussing on Town and Community Councils;
- To review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Agenda and Minutes of the Standards Committee, together with all Reports considered at meetings are published online.

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Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	22 JULY 2025
Report Title:	APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules; however the Standards Committee contributes to the maintenance of probity in the Council.
Executive Summary:	To advise Members of appointments to the Standards Committee.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of two Independent Member (co-opted) appointments to the Committee to be reported to Full Council on 23 July 2025 for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 The membership of Standards Committees shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine members in accordance with the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001, and shall not consist of persons other than members of the relevant authority, independent members (co-opted) or community committee members.
- 2.2 The Council's Standards Committee consists of five Independent Members, two County Borough Council Members and one Town and Community Council Member.
- 2.3 As prescribed by Regulations, where the total number of members of the committee is an even number at least half that number shall be independent members or if an odd number, a majority of that number shall be independent members.
- 2.4 Independent Members are appointed for a period of not less than four and not more than six years and may be reappointed for a consecutive term. Members of local authorities who are Members of the Standards Committee will have a term of office

until the next ordinary local government election following their appointment. They may be reappointed for one further consecutive term.

- 2.5 A meeting of the Standards Committee will only be quorate when at least three Members, including the Chairperson, are present; and at least half the Members present (including the Chairperson) are Independent Members. A quorum of the committee cannot therefore be constituted by the County Borough Members and Town and Community Council Member themselves as the majority should rest with the Independent Members. This places an unduly heavy burden on the Independent Members, and the committee being in danger of not having adequate or required numbers (a quorum) for meetings. On 20 July 2022, Council approved that the membership of the Committee be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) be appointed to the Committee.
- 2.6 The Council has previously provided delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to oversee recruitment processes and appointments to the Standards Committee, and to report back to Council any successful appointment.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Following the resignation of Mr Shawn Cullen and Mr Philip Clarke's term of office ceasing, the Monitoring Officer has gone through the usual process of advertising the vacancies in two newspapers circulating in the area. In accordance with the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001, a Panel (consisting of not more than five Members and at least one Independent Member and one Town and Community Council Member) was convened to consider the applications received and conduct interviews. Following interviews on 1st July 2025, the Panel made the following recommendations on appointments:
- Janet Evans
 - Martyn Daley

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members. Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change and nature implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 In accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report for 2025-26, the remuneration for Chairs of Standards Committees is £268 (4 hours and over), £134 (up to 4 hours) and for ordinary members of the Committee - £210 (4 hours and over) and £105 (up to 4 hours).
- 8.2 The changes to the remuneration of Elected Members for the financial year 2025/26 increased the financial commitment required from this Authority. Some of the cost may be negated by members electing to forgo some or all of their salaries or choosing not to opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme. The additional costs are being met from the centrally held provision for pay and price increases during the 2025/26 financial year.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the appointments of Janet Evans and Martyn Daley to the Standards Committee to be reported to Full Council on 23 July 2025.

Background documents:

None

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