

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

SIZE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose an amendment to the size and membership of the Council's Standards Committee.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Standards Committee of this Council has a current membership of seven members comprised as follows:
- Cllr M Williams (County Borough Member)
 - Cllr G Walter (County Borough Member)
 - Mr J Baker (Independent Member)
 - Mrs J Keily (Independent Member)
 - Mr C Jones OBE (Chair, Independent Member)
 - Mr P Clarke (Independent Member)
 - Cllr G Thomas (Town and Community Council Member).
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 It is therefore proposed that the membership be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) appointed to the committee.
- 4.3 The Council has previously provided delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to oversee recruitment processes and appointment to the Standards Committee, and to report back to Council any successful appointment.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules; however the Standards Committee contributes to the maintenance of probity in the Council.

6. Equality Act 2010 Implications

- 6.1 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.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 In accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report for 2022-23, 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 2022-23 financial year increased the financial commitment required from this Authority. Some of the cost was 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 2022-23 financial year.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- 9.1 approve the revised membership and size of the Standards Committee;
- 9.2 receive a further report following the recruitment process;
- 9.3 note that the Constitution will be amended to reflect the revised membership.

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Background documents

None