

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	7 MARCH 2024
Report Title:	UPDATE FROM OBSERVATIONS OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS
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 feedback to the Committee on any observations that have taken place at Bridgend County Borough Council and Town and Community Council meetings.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee following Members of this Committee observing meetings of Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Town and Community Councils (TCC).

2. Background

- 2.1 There are a number of roles and functions of the Standards Committee, one of which is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members. At its meeting of 16 November 2023 the Committee agreed the process for observing meetings of Bridgend County Borough Council and Town and Community Councils.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Since the November meeting there have been 3 observations:

- 14 December 2023 Pencoed Town Council – officer attendance
- 30 January 2024 Bridgend County Borough Council – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny – Independent Member
- 7 February 2024 Bridgend County Borough Council - Full Council – Independent Member

- 3.2 An officer attended at Pencoed Town Council as they had indicated they would be discussing the observation process agreed by this Committee. The discussion at the meeting focused on their perception that the Standards Committee should have consulted them before introducing the process.
- 3.3 Independent Members attended BCBC meetings. The feedback was that the meetings were well run and were mostly respectful. There was some “political posturing”.
- 3.4 There were no specific concerns raised during the observations and no matters needed to be reported back to the Chairs / Clerks for further consideration.
- 3.5 Whilst the intention of the Committee would be to restrict the observations made to Code of Conduct matters, it is inevitable that other process / governance issues may emerge which Members may include in their observations in the hope they assist BCBC, TCCs and its Members moving forward. The attached observation sheet has been developed to assist Members with their observations (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.6 The observation process has been discussed with Members at training events, and with a number of Clerks. All welcomed the attendance of Independent Members.

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 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 Independent Members are able to be remunerated for attendance under the allowance scheme agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. The costs will be met from existing Democratic Services budget.

9. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- 9.1 Note the report and feedback from observations;
- 9.2 Confirm whether they wish to utilise the observation sheet at **Appendix 1**.

Background documents:

None