

STANDARDS COMMITTEE NAME

Date of Meeting	Monday, 4 July 2022
Report Subject	Update on the Creation of National Standards Forum
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the recommendations made as part of the Penn Review of the Ethical Regime is that the current forum for Independent Members of Standards Committees should be extended over the whole of Wales, thereby creating a National Forum for Standards Committees.

The forum was created originally to provide a support network and forum for exchanging good practice between the standards committees in North Wales. It has latterly been extended to cover 2 councils in mid Wales.

Following the publication of the Penn report all the monitoring officers in Wales were asked whether their authority would support the expansion of the current forum to the whole of Wales. All authorities have responded positively and the WLGA may be willing to help support the expanded forum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the support for a National Standards Forum be welcomed.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE STANDARDS FORUM
1.01	The Mid and North Wales Standards Forum was created as an opportunity for independent Chairs of Standards Committees to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Exchange ideas and best practice 2) Establish a support network

	<p>3) Debate issues and topics of common relevance 4) Receive training</p> <p>The body was originally created by the Monitoring Officers in North Wales. In 2019 the forum agreed to include 2 Councils from mid Wales.</p>
1.02	<p>Support for the forum has, until now, been provided by the monitoring officers themselves on a rotation basis. Each Council takes a turn “hosting” the meeting and the Monitoring Officer for that Council would prepare the agenda, advise the forum and draft the minutes. By convention other Monitoring Officers would not attend in order to save time and duplication of effort. Meetings of the forum notionally took place twice a year but that was subject to resource pressures in the Council next due to act as host.</p>
1.03	<p>Following the Penn Report all Monitoring Officers in Wales agreed to ask their Standards Committees whether that forum should now be extended to the whole of Wales in line with a recommendation in that report. All authorities have confirmed their agreement. The WLGA may be willing to provide the secretariat. Meetings are due to take place over the summer to establish draft terms of reference and explore the provision of support.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>If the WLGA is willing to provide the secretariat for the forum then this would represent a small reduction in the burden on this Council.</p>
2.02	<p>Previously meetings were peripatetic, moving from Council to Council. Given the wider geographical spread it would make sense for at least some to be hosted remotely. Any meetings taking place physically would need to be held a central location accessible to all part of Wales. This would result in an increase in the time commitment, cost and carbon footprint to attend.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>All authorities in Wales have been consulted.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The extension of the forum does not create any significant risks. Indeed by broadening the membership it will serve to provide a greater opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and good practice.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>None.</p>

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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	Penn Review of the Ethical Regime - a review commissioned by Welsh Government and conducted by Richard Penn looking into the Code of Conduct, how it is enforced, how training is undertaken and all other mechanisms to ensure high standards of ethical behaviour.