

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 2 December 2019
Report Subject	Feedback from Town and Community Councils on Independent Member Visits
Report Author	Chief Officer, Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Feedback has been received from 9 Town and Community Councils (T&CC) on the visits undertaken by independent members. The feedback is positive, and even where Councils have offered suggestions for improvement they have commented on how valuable they found the process. Some Councils give more detail than others and there are some suggestions for improvements/further actions that the Standards Committee should consider.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee organise a rota of checks on Town and Community Council websites.
2	That the process for future inspections should include an opportunity for Councils to respond to feedback
3	That Town and Community Councils be thanked for their feedback and participation in the process.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FEEDBACK FROM TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS
1.01	Following the visits undertaken, I sent out a feedback letter to every Town and Community Council. In all, 9 such letters were sent. As well as feedback agreed at the Standards Committee, I have from time to time added other issues such as a recommendation from Full Council that T&CC's consider adopting something similar to our Flintshire Standard.
1.02	Following the report to the joint meeting in October, I asked T&CCs for their feedback on the process and the feedback letters. I set a deadline of 4 th November to receive responses. In all, 9 responses have been received. These are summarised in the document at Appendix 1.
1.03	Some respondents have given more detail than others but all are positive. A number have commented on how smoothly the process worked which is testament to how well the independent members handled the process. Clearly, some Councils have acted on the Committee's suggestions especially those about declarations of interest, name plates and signage to the meeting.
1.04	<p>A number of suggestions have been made about how to improve or expand the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. a Council asked for a "right of reply" to comments made during feedback;ii. a Council suggested that the Committee might consider reviewing T&CC websites for completeness and giving feedback on where mandatory information is missing. <p>Clearly, both of these suggestions are worthy of further consideration. The Committee should consider all the comments at Appendix 1 and whether they wish to adopt any suggestions or amend the process in light of comments received.</p>
1.05	Overall, I think it is fair to say that the process has worked well and that it appears to have produced some changes for the better in practices within T&CCs.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The total cost of the programme of visits is £19.80, which is made up solely of two mileage claims. Visits were planned so that they were as close as possible to independent members' homes, hence the mileage costs being low.</p> <p>The independent members have undertaken the visits in their own time.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The report is itself about the feedback from a consultation exercise and so needed no further consultation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The visits have assessed the levels of compliance with the Code of Conduct and good practice. In making recommendations on how to improve procedures within T&CCs, and although it is not possible to quantify, the Committee will have helped to increase public access to, and satisfaction with, meetings. It may also have helped to reduce the likelihood of a complaint being submitted to the Ombudsman.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Summary of Responses from Town and Community Councils.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Feedback on Visits to T&CCs January 19 Feedback on Visits to T&CCs February 19 Feedback on Visits to T&CCs March 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs April 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs June 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs July 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs September 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs October 19 Feedback on Visits to TCCs November 19</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer, Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.Legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.