

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 3 February 2020
<b>Report Subject</b>	Conduct Issues arising from the Election
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer, Governance

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A parliamentary election took place in December 2019. Inevitably, as this was a general election, the Council only had a role to support the Returning Officer in administering the voting process. Therefore, the Council (as a corporate body) and County Councillors were not directly involved in the election. Many Councillors are active members of political parties, and so campaign/canvass on behalf of those parties as private individuals.

In the run up to the election, the Council operated its pre-election protocol ("PEP") in order to minimise the risk of problems or difficulties. The election campaign was well run by all candidates and parties with no incidents of poor behaviour by County Councillors or any-one else.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the report.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining the Election Process</b>
1.01	On the 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2019, there was a parliamentary or general election. The titular Returning Officer for parliamentary elections is the High Sheriff though it is customary for the High Sheriff to leave the actual role to the Acting Returning Officer, who is the Chief Executive. The County Council must provide the Chief Executive with sufficient resources and support to fulfil the role.

1.02	The County Council and County Councillors have no role in organising a parliamentary election. Many Councillors are active in political parties and so campaign in their private lives on behalf of candidates. This is outside their role as Councillor.
1.03	The County Council is under a legal obligation pursuant to section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 (as amended) not to issue any publicity that supports or appears to support any candidate or party in an election. The County Council therefore has a PEP that operates from the date when notice of election is published.
1.04	The PEP reminds officers of the need to ensure that the Council not only remains but also clearly remains impartial during an election. It includes advice about how to handle visits, press releases etc. During the campaign period the Council also carefully considers what matters it will debate in Committee or at Full Council meetings. Normal business will continue. Where the debate on an issue might be perceived as supporting the views/stance of one candidate/party or another then that item will be postponed until after the election. For example, during this election one Notice of Motion on the NHS was postponed for this reason.
1.05	In a general election the parties and candidates agree to follow nationally laid down codes of conduct that are, because they do not relate to Councillors, outside the remit of this Committee. All parties and candidates observed those codes of conduct and there were no problems during the campaign which was well-managed with thoughtful advice and proactive work to remove any risks.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	None.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	The PEP manages the risk of officers or Councillors creating the impression that the Council supports the stance of any candidate or party.

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

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Gareth Owens, Chief Officer, Governance <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702344 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Gareth.Legal@flintshire.gov.uk">Gareth.Legal@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	None.